

NEVER BUY BREAD AGAIN

20+ HOMEMADE BREAD RECIPES



by Laurie Neverman
author of



**COMMON SENSE
HOMESTEADING**

Using sound judgment to be more self-reliant

Never Buy Bread Again

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*This book is dedicated to my mother,
Irene Mary Zmrazek.*

*I was her shadow in the garden and kitchen throughout
my childhood, and feel honored and blessed to have had
her as my mother and my teacher.*

*I can't think of a better way to honor her memory than
to share what she loved with others.*

*Irene Mary Zmrazek
1933-2010*

Praise from our Readers

On the Basic Sandwich Bread:

“Easy to make, I can pronounce all the ingredients, and it is a family favorite!”



“I just want to thank you for this recipe. We make it all the time. I made the rolls 2 days in a row this week. It is a favorite in this family! Thank you!”



“Made bread and rolls for the first time today using this recipe. Let’s just say YUMMY!!”

On the Potato Bread:

“This is the best bread ever!!!!!! I mixed the ingredients in my bread machine and put it on the dough cycle, then I took the dough out and let it rest for 20 minutes. Then I put the dough into 2 loaf pans and let rise until doubled and baked them in the oven.

The bread was soft and it stayed soft. This is the only bread recipe that I will use. I did freeze one loaf and when I thawed it out it tasted like I just made it :)

YUM! YUM!”



“Made this yesterday – what a lovely loaf! No need to change a thing; this one’s a keeper!”

On the Crusty French Bread:

“Just tried this recipe. I had my bread machine make the dough. I had never used bread flour before, only all purpose. This was AMAZING! The family polished off the loaf, still warm with butter. This recipe has gone into My Favorites!!”



“I made this last night & It was a complete hit!!! First time making bread & it came out beautiful & delicious!!! Thank you for the recipe & easy to follow instructions!”

On Betty’s Buttermilk Rye:

“Thank you for sharing your recipe as this is the 2nd time in a week I have used it. So delicious, I love rye bread and this one made with buttermilk is the best:) I used my Breadman machine on #1 setting and 1% buttermilk and came out with a light crunchy crust with perfect texture and easy slicing.”

On Gram Irene’s Corn Bread:

“This is seriously the best cornbread ever! I am now famous at family gatherings for using this recipe :-). Thank you!”



“This recipe SAVED me! I’d just made a total flop on cornbread muffins from a food.com recipe. I know it’s foolish to try a new recipe last-minute, but I couldn’t find my old standby. So right before a luncheon, I made these after throwing the other “bricks” away. This turned out great!”

Contents

Foreword

Introduction

Ingredients to Avoid

Troubleshooting Tips for Bread Baking

What equipment do I need to bake bread?

What flour should I use to make bread?

How warm should the water that I add to the bread dough be?

What temperature should my bread ingredients be at?

Which yeast should I use to make bread?

How much yeast is in a package?

Is there a certain way I need to add ingredients to the dough?

How warm should my bread be to rise?

My bread didn't rise – what did I do wrong?

My dough is too sticky – can I fix it?

Where in the oven should the bread be placed?

How many loaves can I bake in the oven at one time?

My bread is too dense – I baked a brick – how can I bake lighter bread?

Is it possible to knead bread too much?

My bread dough smells sour like alcohol – what happened, and is it safe to eat?

My bread didn't brown – is it baked?

My bread looked perfect going into the oven – and then it collapsed! What happened?

Basic Sandwich Bread

Easy Sourdough Bread

Cultivating Sourdough Starter

Potato Bread

Cinnamon Swirl Bread

High-Altitude Bread Baking Tips

Crusty French Bread

Pretzel Bread

English Muffin Bread

Homemade Seasoned Croûtons

Buttermilk Rye Bread

Old Fashioned Bread Pudding

Swedish Limpa Bread

Dark Pumpernickel Rye Bread

Green Garden Dip

Duncan's "Meat in a Loaf"

Duncan's Favorite Sloppy Joes

Coconut Flour Bread

To Gluten or Not to Gluten?

Brazilian Cheese Bread

Refrigerating Raw Dough

Gluten Free Sandwich Bread

Gluten Free Flatbread

Freezing Dough and Par-baked Breads

Gram Irene's Cornbread

Storage Tips for Baked Bread

Southern Style Cornbread

Flavored Butters

Classic Beer Bread

Beer Cheese Fondue

Top Secret Banana Quick Bread

Crispy Nuts

A note on freezing bananas...

Cheesy Garlic Zucchini Bread

Tomato and Onion Salad

Basic Flour Tortillas

Basic Biscuits

[Chicken and Dumplings](#)

[Pancakes](#)

[French Toast](#)

[Popovers](#)

["Wheat Thin" Style Crackers](#)

[Kolache](#)

[Filling Recipes for Kolache](#)

[Polish Doughnuts](#)

[Cinnamon Rolls](#)

[Monkey Bread](#)

[Baking with Love](#)

[Learn More](#)

Foreword

“The smell of good bread baking, like the sound of lightly flowing water, is indescribable in its evocation of innocence and delight... [Breadmaking is] one of those almost hypnotic businesses, like a dance from some ancient ceremony. It leaves you filled with one of the world’s sweetest smells... There is no chiropractic treatment, no Yoga exercise, no hour of meditation in a music-throbbing chapel, that will leave you emptier of bad thoughts than this homely ceremony of making bread.”

- Mary Francis Kennedy Fisher, The Art of Eating, 1954

If there is any food that deserves the honor of poetic prose, it has to be bread. Part art, part science, part magic. But so many people these days don’t understand what is truly required to create this substance.

Instead, they suffer through the cellophane-bagged, uniformly-shaped ordinary loaves from the store. Loaves that, if unwrapped, you couldn’t tell one from the next. Loaves that are made in factories instead of kitchens. Loaves that are formed for an hourly wage, assembly-line style.

In my opinion, those loaves could hardly be considered bread, with their bland flavors, gummy textures, and characterless appearances. Don’t even get me started on the unpronounceable chemistry project ingredients like dough conditioners, anti-mold agents, and artificial flavors and preservatives.

Real bread is different. It is prepared in a warm kitchen by a person who becomes intimately acquainted with the bread by individually choosing each ingredient and massaging it into a lump of dough.

Then, the baker waits in anticipation while the lump increases in size, filling the house with a perfume that no scented candle could ever duplicate.

Finally, after a wait that seems to take far too long, the dough is massaged again, at least once and sometimes more, before it is placed into the pan that will determine its final shape.

After more waiting, the loaf goes into a hot oven, and the smell gets even better, until every person who catches a whiff must feel the same anticipation as the cook. That is bread, a substance so simple that it has been around for more than 30,000 years, yet so complex that...well, it has been around for more than 30,000 years.

If you haven't taken the time to make your own bread, you are missing out on this special alchemy that takes flour, liquid, and a rising agent and turns it into a substance that has been added to meals – or even been served as the entire meal itself – for so many centuries.

While it does take time, bread is far easier to make than the advertising world would have you think. Of course, they have to make it seem overly complicated or no one would buy their frozen dough, their cellophane bags of sliced boredom, or their “heat-and-eat” baguettes.

In truth, nothing could be simpler. But it's an art that has been lost to decades of advertising, convenience, and reliance on food manufacturers. Most families don't have a person who makes bread and passes down those traditions anymore.

Don't despair if you don't have a grandmother in an apron to teach you how to bake bread, though. You can revive the tradition with the help of this book.

When my friend Laurie passed on a copy of her manuscript, I couldn't believe how simple it was to make all of these different kinds of bread. Who would have thought that with mostly the standard pantry supplies that you could create edible art?

There are a lot of things you won't find in this book.

- You won't find additives or preservatives or chemicals with alarming-sounding names.
- You won't find convenience items loaded with unpronounceable ingredients.
- You won't find reliance on gadgets that cost almost as much as your monthly mortgage.
- You won't find complicated steps that require 2 years at Le Cordon Bleu to figure out.

You will find simple, down-to-earth instructions with clear explanations. You'll learn to use your own two hands to mix, knead, and shape your bread. You will find many delicious variations on plain old sandwich bread.

You will discover that gluten intolerance doesn't exclude you from the simple pleasure of delicious, dripping-with-butter, fresh-from-the-oven bread.

Laurie is an old-fashioned cook with a modern take on health and nutrition. Her recipes are full of whole ingredients that not only taste delicious, but take food intolerances, economy, and nourishment into account.

There's nothing like the addition of homemade bread to take a plain bowl of soup from boring to incredibly satisfying. Using simple, wholesome ingredients, you'll save money and you'll avoid subjecting your family to harmful additives and chemicals. You will use this book over and over as you add to your bread repertoire.

I have just one warning:

ALWAYS MAKE TWO LOAVES.

Trust me on this one.

Now, show your family how much you love them. Put on your apron and make some bread to go with dinner tonight. When you realize this deliciousness comes at a fraction of the price and is exponentially healthier than the cellophane wrapped impostors, you will never want to choke down the so-called bread from the store again.

Daisy Luther - June 2016

Daisy Luther is a best-selling author who has written books including The Organic Canner, The Pantry Primer: A Prepper's Guide to Whole Food on a Half-Price Budget, and The Prepper's Water Survival Guide: Harvest, Treat, and Store Your Most Vital Resource.

Introduction

Some of my earliest kitchen memories include working side by side with my mom as she baked delicious homemade breads for our family. When I was younger, she used to mix bread by hand in this large ceramic bowl we all called “mom’s bread bowl”. Since there were six of us kids, when mom made bread, she made a lot of bread. I don’t know exactly how big the bowl was, but I’m sure it could have held a couple of gallons of liquid. (It also doubled as the holiday punch bowl.)

My brother Joey accidentally dropped the bowl and broke it one day, much to mom’s frustration. A new bowl was purchased, but it was never quite the same as “the” bread bowl.

Each holiday, we'd start baking well in advance – kolaches, rolache, tea rings, cinnamon rolls and more. With the size of the extended family, folks tended to show up well before and after the actual holiday date, so there were always baked goods and a cup of coffee to welcome them.

From when I was very young, mom taught me how to handle the dough. She was always so strong, working that wooden spoon around in the bowl, adding just the right amount of flour before dumping it onto to a lightly floured table for the final kneading. I was always amazed at how she ended up with so little dough stuck to her, while I generally ended up being a sticky mess. (I've gotten a little less messy since I've grown up.) We rolled out dozens of rounds and little crescents each time we baked.

Recently I've started doing more gluten free baking because of my thyroid condition, and I feel like I'm learning to bake all over again. Some recipes are fairly easy – just swap a gluten free flour blend for conventional flour. Yeast breads – not as straightforward.

Every Easter we volunteered at the church, making huge batches of Grandma Catherine's Polish doughnuts for the bake sale. Although our parish was small, people drove in from surrounding areas just to get those doughnuts. (I guess that's one way to get folks to church.)

When I was fifteen and a half, my mom, my two sisters and I started a catering business. This was my summer job through the rest of high school and most of college. This led to a crazy amount of baking, as we provided fresh homemade buns with every meal. I'm pretty sure after all the time put in there I could roll buns in my sleep.

When I get a craving or really want something bread-like for a meal, I do have a few “go to” recipes that are fairly simple and easy to make. When I bake a loaf of gluten free bread, I’ll usually slice it, freeze it, and then vacuum seal it in two slice packs. That way I can take out only what I need for a day or two, and the rest can stay in the freezer for up to a year or so in good condition. (I don’t eat a lot of bread anymore, and the rest of the family still eats gluten.)

Bread machines may have been bumped from the small appliance aisle by over-priced coffeemakers, but even with all the low carb eating trends I hope there will always be a place for homemade bread at the table. Nothing beats the aroma of fresh baked bread, and the wonderful memories of baking and eating together with family and friends.

In this book you'll find not only easy to follow recipes, but troubleshooting tips, storage tips, recipes for some of my favorite things to eat with bread and recipes that will help you repurpose leftover bread in new ways.

Wishing you many years of baking up wonderful memories,
Laurie Neverman.

What you Won't Find in Homemade Bread

Commercial bread is designed to be durable and cheaply mass produced. As such, it often contains ingredients that I prefer to avoid – and since you're reading this book, I assume you might be concerned about them, too.

For instance, Wonder Classic White Bread has the following ingredients:

Wheat Flour Enriched (Flour, Barley Malt, Ferrous Sulfate [Iron], Vitamin B [Niacin Vitamin B3, Thiamine Mononitrate Vitamin B1 {Thiamin Vitamin B1}, Riboflavin Vitamin B2 {Riboflavin Vitamin B2}, Folic Acid Vitamin B9]), Water, Corn Syrup High Fructose, Contains 22% or less, Wheat Gluten, Salt, Soybean Oil, Yeast, Calcium Sulfate, Vinegar, Monoglyceride, Dough Conditioners (Sodium Stearoyl Lactylate, Calcium Dioxide), Soy Flour, Diammonium Phosphate, Dicalcium Phosphate, Monocalcium Phosphate, Yeast Nutrients (Ammonium Sulfate), Calcium Propionate

Ingredient list courtesy of <http://www.foodfacts.com/ci/nutritionfacts/Bread-and-Flour-Products/Wonder-Classic-White-Bread--oz/30443>.

Ingredients to Avoid

Soybean Oil and Soy Flour

Over 90% of the U.S. soybean crop is genetically modified to be glyphosate tolerant. In recent years, the MRL (maximum residue level) of glyphosate on the crops at harvest was increased 200% to accommodate increasing chemical use.

Soy may also act as an endocrine disruptor when consumed in quantity, potentially contributing to reproductive health issues and increased cancer risks.

High Fructose Corn Syrup

Approximately 90% of the corn crop in the United States is genetically modified (GM), so if you're not buying organic, odds are that most corn containing products that you purchase will be genetically modified. It is commonly noted in online allergy discussion groups that sensitive individuals will react to genetically modified corn and corn products while at the same time being able to safely eat non-GMO corn and corn products with no adverse reactions.

In addition to potentially being more allergenic, high fructose corn syrup has been shown to contain mercury and other contaminants.

It is also harder on the liver than cane sugar, as this excerpt from DrHyman.com explains:

Fructose goes right to the liver and triggers lipogenesis (the production of fats like triglycerides and cholesterol) this is why it is the major cause of liver damage in this country and causes a condition called "fatty liver" which affects 70 million people. The rapidly absorbed glucose triggers big spikes in insulin—our body's major fat storage hormone. Both these features of HFCS lead to increased metabolic disturbances that drive increases in appetite, weight gain, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, dementia, and more.

Source: <http://drhyman.com/blog/2011/05/13/5-reasons-highfructose-corn-syrup-will-kill-you/>

Hidden Glyphosate

Most genetically modified corn is "Roundup Ready[®]", i.e., engineered to withstand glyphosate weedkiller application without dying, and contains Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a biological pesticide. Glyphosate residue may also be found in other ingredients.

For instance, 95% of sugar beets now grown in the United States are also genetically engineered to be glyphosate tolerant. If your sugar doesn't say "organic" or "pure cane sugar", odds are that it's made from GM sugar beets.

Even crops that are not Roundup Ready[®] may be contaminated with glyphosate. In order to produce a more uniform dry down of plants (and potentially higher yields), some sugar cane and wheat farmers are now treating their crops with glyphosate just prior to harvest. Since it is purposely applied just prior to harvest, risk of glyphosate residue is high. If you prefer to avoid glyphosate in your food, stick to organic ingredients.

Calcium Propionate

While propionates do occur naturally in small amounts in foods such as cheese and are produced in the body as part of the digestive process, this is one of those cases where “the dose makes the poison”. Real cheese still molds – highly processed bread doesn’t mold for a very long time.

The [Australian Food Intolerance Network \(AFIN\)](#) lists the following symptoms that have been linked to the consumption of propionic acid salts:

- Irritability
- Restlessness and Inattention

- Sleep disturbance
- Migraine and headaches
- Gastrointestinal symptoms such as stomach aches, irritable bowel, diarrhea
- Urinary urgency, bedwetting
- Eczema and other itchy skin rashes
- Nasal congestion (stuffy or runny nose)
- Depression, unexplained tiredness, foggy brain
- Speech delay, impairment of memory and concentration
- Tachycardia (fast heart beat)
- Arrhythmia
- Seizures
- Growing pains
- Loud voice (no volume control)
- Adult acne

There's a very provocative statement on the AFIN website that caught my attention:

“If you wanted to create a nation of underperforming children, you could hardly do better than to add a preservative known to cause learning difficulties to an everyday staple food.”

- Sue Dengate

It makes you wonder if something so simple as commercial bread could be a major player in the increase in learning difficulties being seen in schools. I'd just as soon not have my kids be the guinea pigs in this particular experiment.

Troubleshooting Tips for Bread Baking

I've been writing about bread baking for several years now, and run into many of the same questions on a regular basis. This section is for the novice baker, to help introduce you to bread baking basics and troubleshoot common issues so you can bake with confidence.

What equipment do I need to bake bread?

All you need to bake a basic loaf of bread is:

- a mixing bowl large enough to hold the risen dough
- a wooden spoon to mix
- measuring cups and spoons (some bread recipes use a scale, but those in this book will stick with cups and spoons)
- a flour sack towel/tea towel to cover dough while it is rising
- a butter knife to portion bread into loaves or rolls for baking
- and a pan or pans to hold your bread during baking
- some type of oven to bake the bread in
- wire rack to cool finished loaves

Some other items I have found helpful and/or time saving include:

- A heavy duty stand mixer with dough paddle, such as the Bosch Kitchen Machine, which can mix double batches of bread with ease, or a Cuisinart or KitchenAid. These will mix the dough, which can then be baked in the pan and oven of your choice.
- A bread machine – If you are baking a single loaf at a time and don't want to heat up the kitchen as much as a standard oven will, a bread machine may be a worthwhile option. Be aware that most of them are not built to mix heavier breads like 100% whole wheat. You can often find used units in thrift stores, and download their manuals from the Internet. I used a bread machine when my boys were small, but now find it much more convenient to mix double batches and freeze some of the bread for later use.

- A stainless steel chopper/scrapper - This roughly hand-sized rectangular blade can be used to portion dough for baking, to scoop and transfer dough, and to clean the counter after kneading.
- A rolling pin – For rolling out French bread, Duncan’s meat in a loaf, cinnamon rolls, tortillas or biscuits.
- Stoneware loaf pans – I started baking with metal loaf pans, but found that I get more consistent results and have an easier time getting the loaves out of the pans with stoneware pans.
- Sheet pans, pie plates or muffin tins – For different shapes of loaves, I use different shapes of pans.
- Parchment paper or reusable parchment paper – This can be used to line sheet pans to prevent sticking.
- Large stockpot – For boiling the pretzel bread before baking.
- An oven proof thermometer – You can use a thermometer to check the internal temperature of breads to ensure they have finished cooking. This is helpful for gluten free breads, which don’t brown quite the same as gluten breads and often require longer baking times. It’s also helpful for very dark breads, which start out brown, so it’s tough to tell just by looks whether they are done baking.
- A pastry brush – For coating breads with a salt water wash for a crackly crust or butter for a softer crust.

What flour should I use to make bread?

This may seem obvious to some, but bread flour is the preferred flour for making bread. Why use bread flour and not all purpose flour? (I mean, it says “all purpose”, right? Bread is a purpose.) Bread flour has higher gluten (protein) content.

Gluten gives standard yeast breads wonderful stretchiness to their dough, to trap those beautiful burping yeast bubbles so your bread rises to blissful heights. Gluten is what I miss most in gluten free baking.

Brands do make a difference. My personal favorite “off the shelf” flour is King Arthur. It has always given me excellent results. I also recommend organic Golden Buffalo flour from Heartland Mill.

Golden Buffalo is a high protein wheat flour that has the coarsest flakes of bran removed, leaving the finer bran and germ behind. It's like "whole wheat light". Natural Way Mills Organic Gold n White Flour has also given us very good results.

If you're buying wheat berries to grind for bread flour, look for ones that are labeled "hard wheat". Hard wheat varieties have higher gluten content than soft wheat. I generally use a hard white, but hard red spring wheat gives a nice, somewhat nutty flavor to the bread and is also very good.

Most of the older grain varieties like Einkorn and Kamut® contain less gluten, so you may want to wait to experiment with them until after you've mastered bread making with higher gluten grains.

How warm should the water that I add to the bread dough be?

Think baby's bath water. If you would scald your backside dipping it in the water, it's too hot. The cookbook that comes with my bread machine asks for 80°F (26.7°C) water. I've seen other recommendations that go as high as 120-130°F. If your temperature is much higher than that, you're getting into dangerous, yeast killing territory. (140°F [60°C] = dead yeast.)

I aim for around 90-100°F (32-38°C) water (or other liquid) to activate the yeast. If you don't know how hot that is, get an inexpensive kitchen thermometer to help. If your yeast is happy, you should see bubbles start to form in your proofing water and in the beginning stages of dough making.

What temperature should my bread ingredients be at?

For best results, ingredients should be at room temperature or gently warmed. Cold ingredients will slow down the yeast activity and increase rising time. I do still use eggs out of the refrigerator, and sometimes flour out of the freezer. When I do, I know that the bread will take a little longer to rise, and plan accordingly.

Which yeast should I use to make bread?

You'll find several types of yeast in the baking aisle. (Don't use wine yeast to make bread, or bread yeast to make wine. They are different strains of yeast.) They may stock fresh yeast, active dry yeast and instant yeast. Active dry yeast and instant yeast are most commonly used.

Many recipes call for active dry yeast, which must be proofed (dissolved in warm liquid) before you mix in the rest of the ingredients. If you don't proof your active dry yeast, you don't give it a chance to dissolve properly, so the bread may be gritty, and you don't give the yeast beasties a chance to wake up, so the bread will not rise well.

Quick rise, instant or bread machine yeast is made up of finer grains, and can be used directly in a recipe without being proofed. This makes it a time saver because you don't have to wait for the yeast to wake up. It is recommended for use in bread machines. I normally use SAF-INSTANT yeast when I'm not making sourdough.

Fresh yeast must be kept refrigerated and spoils quickly. It comes in little rectangular patties and looks like tan toothpaste.

How much yeast is in a package?

- 1 package active dry yeast = about 2 1/4 teaspoons = 1/4 ounce
- 1 (0.6-ounce) cube or cake of compressed yeast (also known as fresh yeast) = 1 package of active dry yeast
- 1 envelope or packet of instant yeast = 2 1/4 teaspoons = 1/4 ounce
- 1 (0.6-ounce) cube or cake of compressed yeast = 1 1/2 to 2 teaspoons instant yeast

Substitution: To substitute instant or bread machine yeast for active dry yeast, use 25% less instant yeast than active dry.

Is there a certain way I need to add ingredients to the dough?

In each recipe, there will be instructions on what to add when for best results. Adding the flour cup by cup allows you to watch the development of the dough so you can adjust the recipe slightly for differences in ingredients (some flours are drier than others) and environmental conditions (humidity and temperature will influence how the dough behaves).

In quick breads, leavening agents such as baking soda are activated by moisture, so it's best to mix them with the wet ingredients just before baking.

If you mix your batter together and let it sit around before cooking, the bubbles will form and burst, leaving you with a very flat loaf – or crepes instead of pancakes.

How warm should my bread be to rise?

For your bread to rise, or proof, it helps if it's warm, but not too warm. With healthy yeast, bread will even rise in the refrigerator – it just rises really slowly. Just check out any of those “5 minutes per day” bread recipes where they keep a tub of dough in the fridge. The fridge dough will have bubbles.

Most of us would like to bake the bread the same day we mix it up, so a little warmth is helpful. Remember, don't go over 140°F (60°C) or you'll kill the yeast.

For the first rise or bulk proof, aim for around 75-85°F (24-29°C). For the second rise or final proof of the shaped loaves, aim for around 90-100°F (32-38°C).

Temperatures that are too warm will yield flopped or flattened bread as the yeast pumps out gas faster than the gluten can stretch and organize to create a lovely domed bread structure. Slowing down the ferment a little also develops a better flavor.

This is one of the reasons homemade bread often tastes richer than mass produced commercial breads, which are all about speed.

My bread didn't rise – what did I do wrong?

If you have the right temperature ranges listed above and your bread still won't rise, there may be a problem with your yeast. Remember, active dry yeast needs to proof in warm liquid for 10-15 minutes before adding it to the rest of the ingredients. You can mix your sugar into your proofing water to help jump start the process if you like. Yeasts like to eat sugars.

If your temperatures are correct and you proofed your yeast and it still isn't working, check the date on the yeast package. My mom had a friend call who tried to make mom's bun recipe, and the friend couldn't get it to rise. They talked over what had been done and couldn't find a problem – until they checked the date on the yeast. It had expired 7 years ago! The tiny grocery store in my home town didn't do a ton of business, and I guess that product sat on the shelf much longer than it should have.

My dough is too sticky – can I fix it?

Many recipes for the home bread baker are measured by volume (cups, tablespoons, etc.) because it's convenient. The problem is that flour can readily absorb moisture depending on the humidity levels. Also, different types of flour will naturally contain more or less moisture and behave differently. This means that even if you follow a recipe exactly, your dough may turn out too sticky or too hard.

For example, freshly ground flour tends to have a higher moisture content, and in my experience always makes a sticky dough. The Golden Buffalo flour I've been baking with tends to be very dry, and I usually end up using only 2/3 to 3/4 of the flour that I would typically use for a loaf of bread or it turns into a brick.

If your dough is too sticky, you can usually fix it by kneading in extra flour a little bit at a time until the right consistency is reached. Conversely, if your dough is too stiff and dry, you can knead in more water, around 1-2 tablespoons at a time, until it softens up. Don't add a lot of water at once, or you'll make a sticky, sloppy mess. As I mentioned, some flours will naturally be stickier than others. Standard, good quality commercial bread flour will be the easiest to work with and less likely to make sticky dough.

Where in the oven should the bread be placed?

Unless otherwise specified, bread should be placed near the center of the oven for even browning. Too low, and you'll have scorched bottoms, too high = scorched tops.

How many loaves can I bake in the oven at one time?

When baking, you should always leave some room around pans for air circulation. I have baked as many as five loaf pans on one rack, but prefer to limit it to three.

If you are attempting to bake two sheet pans of bread or buns at the same time, the pans should be rotated midway through the baking for more even cooking. A slightly longer cooking time will likely be required.

My bread is too dense – I baked a brick – how can I bake lighter bread?

To go from brick making to bread baking, start with the right ingredients. With experience, you can work with different ingredients more easily, but for the beginning baker, keeping things simple produces more consistent results.

White bread flour will make a lighter loaf than whole wheat flour. Start with white bread flour and gradually add more whole wheat flour until you get a mix that works for you.

Make sure your water is warm and of medium softness. Red Star Yeast notes that, "Too hard or too soft water, as well as water high in fluoride or chlorine, will result in short, stubby loaves." Use filtered or bottled water if you have any of these problems.

Make sure your yeast is fresh and active. Proof active dry yeast.

Make sure you knead the dough enough to develop the gluten, which will give structure to the bread so it traps the air bubbles inside. This means kneading at least 6-8 minutes by machine or 10-12 minutes by hand.

For whole wheat flour, more kneading may be required. You'll know that you've kneaded the dough enough when it starts to develop good elasticity and an almost satiny feel.

White bread flour based dough should hold up to the window pane test where you can stretch a thin membrane of dough between your fingers. Whole wheat bread dough should still be stretchy, even if you can't quite form a thin membrane.

Is it possible to knead bread too much?

If you're mixing by hand, it's pretty unlikely that you will over-mix/knead your bread too much. If you're using a mixer, over-kneading is more of a possibility. Don't crank your mixer on high and walk away. I always use a low setting on my Bosch Universal Kitchen Machine to knead bread. (I upgraded to the Bosch after killing three bread machines. Over ten years and it's still going strong.)

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for your machine. Turning a heavy duty electric mixer up on high and leaving it may cause the dough to overheat and start breaking down the structure of the dough.

My bread dough smells sour like alcohol – what happened, and is it safe to eat?

When yeast breads rise too long, they “over-proof”. Alcohol is a natural byproduct of yeast, along with carbon dioxide.

More fermenting equals more alcohol. They should still be safe to bake and eat. The texture and flavor will be different, but the alcohol should be driven off by the heat of baking.

My bread didn't brown – is it baked?

There can be several reasons bread doesn't brown properly. Most commonly, the oven isn't heating right. Get an oven thermometer and make sure your oven is holding the correct temperature, and that your top heating element is working.

If your bread has reached an internal temperature of 200°F (93°C), it's baked enough to eat, whether it's brown or not. If you are baking with steam to get a crackly crust, too much steam/moisture building up on the bread can prevent it from browning. Try using less steam.

On the flip side, if your bread is burning on the top before it's baked all the way through, try adjusting your oven temperature down. If you have your oven manual, some of them give options for resetting your temperature range. Otherwise, you can just note the difference and adjust recipes accordingly. My oven tends to run a little hot, so I drop suggested recipe temperatures by 5°F and it works just fine.

If your bottoms are getting too brown before your tops are done and your oven temperature is fine, you may want to invest in heavier bread pans and/or a baking stone.

Stoneware loaf pans and baking stones hold and gently distribute the heat during baking to avoid hot spots and provide even browning.

I invested in two Pampered Chef unglazed loaf pans many years ago and they are still holding up well to weekly use. There are also a variety of glazed stoneware loaf pans available, and glass loaf pans work well, too.

My bread looked perfect going into the oven – and then it collapsed! What happened?

This may sound a little strange, but you want to put your bread in the oven before it looks perfect. Bread will rise a little in the oven as it bakes, so you want to get it baking when it's just a little smaller than you expect the finished loaf to be. If your bread has risen too far when it goes in, odds are it will fall a little (or a lot) during baking.

Another possibility is that your dough is too wet. If it looks fine at the beginning of baking and then collapses, try reducing the amount of liquid or adding a little more flour the next time around. On the King Arthur bread machine advice section, they note: “Bread that rises, then collapses in the middle as it bakes — the infamous “crater bread” — contains too much liquid. Adjust your formula.”

Yet another reason your bread collapsed may get back to what I mentioned earlier about rising temperatures that are too warm. Remember, slow and steady on the rise gives the bread time to build a support structure to capture and hold the CO₂ from the yeast.

If your bread flops, don't give up!

If my teenage sons can manage to make a decent loaf of bread, you can, too! Start with a proven recipe, use quality ingredients, and don't skimp on the kneading time. With practice you'll be creating beautiful loaves of fresh baked bread.

Below, we have some basic equipment for making bread. Clockwise from top left: cooling rack and flour sack towel, stoneware bread pans, 2 cup capacity liquid measuring cup, butter knife, dry measuring cups, kitchen scraper/cutter, measuring spoons, rolling pin and in the center a large mixing bowl and wooden spoon.





Basic Sandwich Bread

Dough Recipe for Buns or Sandwich Bread

This is my “go to” recipe for our regular bread baking, and the first one I taught my boys to bake. We use it for sandwich bread or homemade buns, or make a double batch and do some of each. It keeps well and freezes well. More often than not, I (or the boys) make a double batch and form three medium loaves. One loaf stays out to use right away; the other two are frozen for later use.

For flour, I often use half organic white bread flour and half fresh ground hard white winter wheat or freshly ground hard red spring wheat. You can use 100% whole wheat, but the dough will be heavier. Freshly ground whole wheat will also tend to bake a more dense loaf than commercial whole wheat flour.



Basic Sandwich Bread Ingredients

- 1 egg plus enough warm water to equal 1 1/3 cups
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
- 4 cups bread flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons SAF-INSTANT yeast, bread machine yeast or 2 teaspoons active dry yeast

Directions

If using active dry yeast, add the yeast to the warm water and allow it to warm and dissolve following directions on yeast package before adding the rest of the ingredients. Instant yeast may be added at the same time as other ingredients.

If using a bread machine or mixer, place all ingredients in mixer or bread machine and mix for 6-8 minutes, until ingredients are well mixed and gluten has had a chance to develop.

Adjust flour or water, one spoonful at a time, if dough is too stiff or too sticky.

Once dough has a good texture, allow to mix on low for 6-8 minutes. (Continue on next page with "cover and let rise".)

If mixing by hand, blend all ingredients except flour. Add flour one cup at a time, mixing well after each addition. You may need to adjust the amount of flour based on humidity conditions.

When dough is stiff enough to mix by hand, dump onto a well floured counter and knead for 5-10 minutes. Cover and let rise for 20 minutes.

Punch down dough, and let it rise again until double in size.

Divide dough into desired number of buns and loaves and shape accordingly. Remember, the bread will rise again and double in size, so small buns will get much larger.

When making dinner rolls, place dough balls close to each other so they touch when they rise for a more tender bun.

When making hamburger buns, I make them about 2 inches across, and then flatten them slightly before letting them rise, so you have a wider, not so tall, bun that will fit the burger better.

Place dough in greased loaf pan or on greased baking sheet. Note: I line my baking sheets with reusable parchment paper instead of greasing them. I grease my bread pans with coconut oil or locally rendered lard.

A single batch will make two smallish 9"x 5" loaves, or 8-12 buns, depending on size.

Cover with a clean flour sack towel and place in a warm location until bread doubles in size.

I like to use my kitchen scraper to cut the dough to size and transfer the loaves into the pans. It's also great for scraping the counter clean when you're done.

When bread has doubled in size, preheat oven to 350°F for bread, 375°F for buns.

Bake buns around 12-15 minutes at 375°F, until lightly browned. Bake bread at 350°F for around 25-30 minutes, until lightly browned.

When baking is done, move finished bread and buns to a wire rack to cool. Letting loaves cool in the bread pan may lead to sweating and soggy bottomed bread.

Although your bread will smell wonderful, it is best to let it cool for at least fifteen minutes to half an hour before slicing. When you cut bread hot out of the oven, it still may be a little bit soft, making it more likely that you will squish and deform the loaf when cutting.

More importantly, when you cut into a loaf fresh out of the oven, it's still steaming hot. The crust seals in that steam, keeping the bread tender and delicious. When you cut into hot bread, that steam escapes, allowing your bread to dry out. This leaves the rest of the loaf dry and crumbly. Of course, if your family or gathering eats the entire loaf in one sitting, this isn't an issue.

When the loaf has completely cooled, store it in an airtight container at room temperature or freeze for longer storage.

Do not refrigerate (more on this in the [storage section](#)).



Easy Sourdough Bread

I'm not a sourdough expert like my friend Wardee from [Traditional Cooking School](#), but I have enjoyed experimenting with this old school method of bread baking. You can purchase a sourdough starter online from companies such as Cultures for Health, or you can capture and nurture your own wild starter.

Why use a sourdough starter instead of yeast? Sourdough often has a lower glycemic index than other breads, so it won't spike blood sugar as much. The sourdough fermentation process effectively pre-digests the flour/grain, making the nutrients in it easier to absorb.



The “sourness” of the bread comes from acetic acid, which inhibits mold growth, acting as a natural preservative.

I make up my dough in my Bosch mixer. It takes around half an hour of kneading to get a nice “window pane” dough. This recipe makes a pretty sizable loaf, so I either make one big loaf on a cookie sheet or divide the dough into two loaves in bread pans.

For the large loaf, instead of an “x” on top, I make parallel lines. Please don’t skip the step of slashing the top of the bread, as it allows room for the bread to expand in the oven.

The texture of the bread is smooth and firm. The crust is appropriately chewy, but not tough, and it has a mild sour flavor. I like to use a mix of white and whole wheat flour, as freshly ground whole wheat makes very sticky dough.

Cultivating Sourdough Starter

To capture your own sourdough starter, you can use a wide mouth Mason jar, other glass, steel, or crockery that is roughly 4 cups. The starter will expand as it becomes active.

Start with whole grain wheat or rye flour and pure, unchlorinated water. Place about 1 scant cup of flour and 4 ounces (1/2 cup) warm water in your choice of nonreactive vessel. Mix well.

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Cover the container with a coffee filter or cloth. Place in a warm location such as near a stove or on top of the fridge. If using a heating pad, place a folded towel between the heat source and the starter. Let sit 24 hours.

On day two, discard half of the starter mix. This can go into the compost. Add the same amount of flour (you may use white flour if you like) and water that you used on day one. Mix well, cover, and let rest another 24 hours.

By day three, you should be starting to see bubbles. Discard half the starter (or use it to make brownies, cookies, pancakes, or other baked goods that don't require a very active starter).

To get your starter into high gear for bread baking, you should start feeding it twice a day, roughly 12 hours apart. After about a week of feeding, your starter should bubble very actively and have a slightly sour aroma. The starter should roughly double in volume each time it is fed.

When the starter is ready, feed the starter and let it rest at room temperature for 6-8 hours before using in your recipe.

To store your starter, place it in a loosely covered container in the refrigerator.

Note: It is best not to refrigerate your starter until it is at least a month old, because it will strengthen over time. The starter should be fed right before storage, and should be fed at least weekly to keep it healthy.

If you do a fair amount of baking/cooking with sourdough, keep the starter out at room temp with regular feedings (once a day for maintenance, twice a day when you need an active starter).

Easy Sourdough Bread Ingredients

Adapted from Cultures for Health

- 2 1/3 cups fresh sourdough starter
- 3 1/3 cups flour
- 1-1 1/2 cups water (approximate)
- Scant tablespoon salt

Directions

Mix sourdough starter, flour and salt together. Use enough water to make bread dough (a moist dough is preferable to a dry dough).

Knead dough until it passes the “window pane test” (a small piece of dough will stretch between four fingers thin enough to allow light to pass through without breaking).

Shape the dough into a loaf. Place in a pan, proofing basket or on a board. Cover lightly with a towel and allow the dough to rise for 4-24 hours.

If desired, a short (4-12 hours) proofing period can be used and the dough can be punched down, reshaped and allowed to rise a second time, but a second proofing period is not required.

Slice an X shape or parallel slashes in the top of the loaf with a very sharp knife or razor blade.

Bake at 400°F until the internal temperature reaches 210°F (use a meat thermometer inserted into the bottom or side of the loaf). Bake 30-60 minutes (depending on loaf size).

Allow the bread to cool before slicing.



Potato Bread

Quite often when I make mashed potatoes for supper, I end up with just a dab (less than a cup) of potatoes left – not really enough for another meal. So how do you stretch a small amount of potatoes into another meal sized portion? One option is [chicken and gnocchi soup](#) - another favorite option is potato bread.

Most of the “potato bread” recipes I’ve seen used powdered mashed potatoes – not something I keep in my pantry. My husband used to be a fan of store bought potato bread when we were first married – you know that kind that resembles cotton candy in bread form? (I’m pretty sure they use potato flakes...)

I was tickled to finally find a recipe that uses real mashed potatoes. I throw mine in just the way I serve them – butter, milk, salt and pepper included. To get the potato/water measure, I put the mashed potato into a 2 cup Pyrex measuring cup, and add water to bring the level up to 1 3/4 cup.

This recipe produces a moist, dense loaf that is great for sandwiches and toast, and keeps for the better part of a week. For longer storage, it freezes very well, in case you want to make a double or triple batch.



Potato Bread Ingredients

- 7 ounces cooked potato (you can use leftover mashed potatoes, or cook up a small potato and mash it)
- Water, enough to equal 1 3/4 cups when combined with the potato
- 2 tablespoons softened butter
- 2 1/2 tablespoons sugar (or honey)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3 1/2 cups bread flour
- 2 teaspoons dry yeast or 1 1/2 teaspoons SAF-INSTANT yeast

Potato Bread Directions

If using a bread machine, select “wheat”, “sweet”, or “white” setting. Do not use a timer. I normally mix the dough in my Bosch Universal Plus Kitchen Machine and then bake it in the oven.

I add everything into the machine and mix for 6-8 minutes, adding additional flour if needed. Add the last cup of flour slowly – you want a soft, elastic dough. Too much flour will give you harder dough and drier bread.

If kneading by hand, mix wet ingredients with yeast until thoroughly blended, then add dry ingredients, adjusting flour as needed for a soft, elastic dough. This dough will be a little bit stickier than many bread doughs. This is normal.

Let bread rest and rise for around 20 minutes, then punch down and let it rise again until roughly double in size. Once doubled in size, form dough into loaves and place in greased bread pans.

A single recipe makes one large loaf or two smaller loaves. I usually divide the dough into two 9” x 5” pans, or make a double batch and divide it into three regular loaves.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Bake for 25-30 minutes, until golden brown.

Remove from pans and cool on wire racks.

Cinnamon Swirl Bread

For a fun twist on your potato bread, you can turn it into a loaf of cinnamon or cinnamon raisin bread.

Simply prepare the dough as normal (you may add an extra tablespoon of sugar if you'd like it to be a little sweeter). When you are ready to shape the dough for baking, roll it into a rectangle roughly 16"x8".

Sprinkle the dough with a mixture of three tablespoons sugar and two teaspoons of cinnamon and 1/4 cup raisins (optional).

Tightly roll up the dough, starting with the narrow edge. (Remember, this needs to fit in a bread pan.)

Pinch edge to seal. Place loaf sealed edge down in a well greased 9"x5" loaf pan.

Let rise in a warm location until double in size, about 50 minutes. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Bake for around 25 to 30 minutes, until lightly browned.

Remove from pans and cool on a wire rack.

High-Altitude Bread Baking Tips

As with canning, some adjustments need to be made at higher altitudes for successful bread baking.

Because the air is a little thinner and gravity as a hair lower, dough will have a tendency to rise more rapidly. This will make bread more course and grainy - functional, but not so great for a PB&J.

Here are two steps you can take to create a finer-textured bread:

- Shorten your rise time. Watch for the loaf to double in size or become well rounded and pop it in the oven right away. Higher rising will likely lead to collapse of the finished bread.
- Cut back on the yeast a little, or allow the dough to rise an additional time (for instance, three times instead of two) before shaping it into a loaf.



Crusty French Bread

With Bread Bowl and French Twist Variations

Basic French bread is one of my “go to” bread recipes. I use it to accompany soup and salad, or a hearty stew. Of all the bread recipes I use, it is, not surprisingly, the best one to use for French toast. Because it has a sturdier crust, it holds up well even when soaked with egg batter, so you don’t end up with your toast falling apart before you get it to the pan.

French bread also makes great edible bread bowls for thick soup or stew. Simply shape the dough onto rounds instead of long loaves and bake as directed below. For company, or to dress up your bread for home use, you can also turn this recipe into French twists, which are a twisted bread stick.



Crusty French Bread Ingredients

Loaves:

- 1 1/4 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon bread machine yeast or SAF-INSTANT yeast
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3 1/2 cups bread flour

Glaze:

- 2 tablespoons water
- 1/2 teaspoons salt

Directions

To make the dough, you can use the dough cycle on your bread machine, mix in a heavy stand mixer with a dough hook, use a Bosch Kitchen Machine, or mix by hand.

Dissolve sugar, yeast and salt in warm water.

Add flour cup by cup, mixing after each addition, until a firm dough is formed (or let the dough cycle do its thing).

Let it rise for about 20 minutes, punch down, and let it rise again until doubled in size.

To Make Loaves

Roll out the dough in a rectangle, just slightly shorter than the length of your baking sheet and about half as wide. Roll up jelly roll style.

Place on greased pan (or cover pan with reusable parchment paper), seam side down. Allow to rise until double in size.

To Make the Salt Water Glaze

The glaze will give your bread a crispy crust. Mix the salt and water together in a small bowl.

Score dough with a sharp knife three times, 1/3 of the way through the loaf. Use a pastry brush to brush the loaf with the salt water glaze.

Bake about 20-25 minutes at 400°F. Cool on wire rack. A single recipe makes one loaf.

Bread Bowls for Soup

Instead of a long loaf, divide the dough into two portions and shape it into rounds. Let rise and glaze as with bread. Bake bowls at 400°F for around 15 minutes, until lightly browned.

French Twists (Pictured on Book Cover)

Divide dough into 10 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a long, thin rope, about the diameter of your finger. Fold each rope in half and twist, starting at the fold.

Place twists on greased baking sheet and brush with 1/3 cup melted butter. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in size.

Brush with glaze and bake at 400°F for 12-15 minutes or until lightly browned.



Pretzel Bread

This recipe was requested by a friend of mine who had purchased pretzel rolls and wanted to make them at home.

The first time I made this recipe, I made the mistake of turning my back on the boiling soda water. The next thing I knew, I had soda water all over my stove. Use a big pot when you make this recipe, because it will foam, and don't get too distracted while you're waiting for your water to boil.

In spite of the mess, this was still one of the recipes that my family liked best. The chewy, salty crust is delicious.

You can form the dough into buns or bread loaves. The buns are a little easier to get in and out of the boiling water, but the bread looks more impressive to bring to the table for serving.



Pretzel Bread Ingredients

Adapted from AllRecipes.com

Dough:

- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 envelope (2 1/4 teaspoons) bread machine or SAF-INSTANT yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3 cups all-purpose flour or more as needed

Topping:

- Coarse sea salt

Boiling Solution:

- 3 quarts water
- 3/4 cup baking soda

Egg Wash:

- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon water

Directions

Warm milk and butter to around 100°F. Butter should be soft but not completely melted.

Add milk mixture, brown sugar and yeast to mixing bowl. Stir to dissolve yeast and sugar.

Add salt and 2 cups of flour, mix until blended.

Add remaining flour, 1/4 cup at a time, mixing after each addition, until a soft dough is formed. (You may not need all the flour, or you may need a little extra.)

Dump the dough onto a lightly floured surface. Knead until smooth and elastic, roughly 8-10 minutes. Place dough in a greased bowl and cover.

Place in a warm area and let rise until doubled in size, about one hour.

To bake the bread:

Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large stockpot, combine water and baking soda. Bring to a boil. While water is heating, divide dough into 2 equal pieces and form into large rounds or loaf shapes. Let rest for 10 minutes, or until water is boiling.

Gently drop loaves (or buns) into the boiling water solution. Boil one minute, flip, and boil one minute more. Use a slotted spoon or scoop to remove loaf (buns) from pot and place on a greased baking sheet. Boil one loaf at a time or up to 5 buns at a time.

Whisk together egg and water in a small bowl. Brush the egg wash over the bread.

Slice an “x” in the top of the buns, and an “x” or slashes across the top of the bread loaves to allow for expansion during cooking.

Sprinkle loaves (buns) with coarse sea salt.

Bake for 15 minutes at 400°F, and then reduce the temperature to 350°F and bake an additional 10-12 minutes until the loaves are evenly browned.

Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack.



English Muffin Bread

I'd like to dedicate this recipe to my friend, Tami, who makes homemade English muffins and uses them to create breakfast sandwiches her family refers to as "egg Dickmuffins" in honor of her husband, Dick.

I've never been a big fan of English muffins, but like most homemade versus store bought options, the homemade version tastes so much better. This is a dense, heavy bread, dusted with cornmeal, with a chewy crust just like an English muffin – but is a lot less work.

If you're a fan of raisin bread, try mixing 1/4-1/2 cup of raisins and a teaspoon of cinnamon into the dough before spreading it into the pans for the flavor without the fuss. You can also experiment with mix-ins such as mini chocolate chips, dried cranberries or cherries, chopped cranberries and orange zest – use your imagination!



English Muffin Bread Ingredients

Adapted from AllRecipes.com

- 2 cups milk
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal
- 6 cups bread flour
- 2 packages (5 teaspoons) active dry yeast
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda

Directions

Heat the milk and water to 125°F (very warm).

Lightly grease two loaf pans and sprinkle cornmeal in the bottom of the pans. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, blend 3 cups flour, yeast, sugar, salt and baking soda.

Add the warm wet mixture to flour mixture. Stir until blended. Add the remaining flour, 1 cup at a time, until a stiff batter is formed. Spread batter into prepared pans.

Cover and let rise in a warm place until nearly doubled in size, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400°F.

Bake bread in preheated oven until golden brown, about 25 minutes.

Remove from pans and cool on wire rack.

Homemade Seasoned Croûtons

Ingredients

- 8 slices of bread - any sort
- 1/4 cup olive oil, or melted butter or coconut oil - your choice
- 1-2 teaspoons seasoning

Seasoning blend ideas (or use your imagination or combos from the herbed butter recipes):

- For garlic croûtons, try 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt or 1 teaspoon garlic and 1/8 teaspoon salt, plus 1 teaspoon dried parsley.
- For Italian style, try a pinch of salt with dried oregano or basil.
- For cheesy garlic with garlic powder and 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan.

Directions

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Slice and cube your bread. I slice, stack, and slice again, making cubes roughly 1 inch by 1 inch by 1/2 inch. The cubes will shrink up a little as they are tossed in the oil. Some folks trim the crusts, but we're not that fussy.

Mix together fat and seasonings in a large bowl, toss bread cubes to coat. Alternatively, some people prefer to paint the seasoned oil on the bread and then slice it.

Spread the seasoned croûtons on a baking sheet and place in the oven. Bake 30-45 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes or so, until crisp completely through. Taste testing recommended - just don't burn your tongue!

Remove from oven and allow to cool completely.

Store in a tightly sealed container in a cool dry location for up to a week. For longer storage, keep in the freezer. (The fats will go rancid over time if left out, so eating fresh is best.)

You can also crush these and use them in recipes that call for seasoned bread crumbs. Making these with bread that's a bit stale is just fine, too.





Betty's

Buttermilk Rye Bread

When we moved to our current home, our neighbor, Betty, showed up with homemade bread and garden goodies.

Betty later became my son's piano teacher, and we enjoy playing cards with her and her husband, Jack. They live on a beautiful old homestead just around the corner from us that has been in their family for over 100 years, and recently celebrated 50 years of marriage. I joked with my husband that we're almost halfway caught up to them (we've now been together over 22 years).

Betty shared her Buttermilk Rye Bread recipe with me. She uses a bread machine, I bake mine in the oven. Usually I double this recipe and make three medium loaves. The buttermilk keeps this recipe moist, never dry, and it makes great sandwich bread.



Buttermilk Rye Bread Ingredients

- 1/2 cup buttermilk, warm
(or milk kefir or sour milk)
- 1 cup water, warm
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon caraway seeds (organic is great if you can get it)
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 2 1/2 teaspoons active dry yeast (one envelope) or
- 1 1/2 teaspoons SAF-INSTANT yeast
- 2 cups white bread flour
- 1 1/2 cups rye flour

Directions

If using a bread machine: load ingredients in order listed and choose a setting that bakes in around 3 hours and 25 minutes.

If mixing by hand or in a mixer: blend milk, water, sugar, salt, caraway seeds, butter and yeast. You may substitute milk kefir or sour milk or buttermilk powder and additional water for the buttermilk if needed.

Mix until yeast and sugar are dissolved. Add flour cup by cup until a slightly sticky dough forms. Knead for six to eight minutes.

Cover and let rise for 20 minutes. Punch down dough. Let rise again until about double in size.

Form into one larger loaf (9"x 5" pan) or two smaller loaves (8"x 4" pan) and place into your choice of greased bread pan.

Buttermilk Rye Bread Directions, continued from previous page.

Place in a warm location, cover with a flour sack towel/lint free kitchen towel and let rise until double.

Bake at 350°F for 25-30 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack.

Bonus Recipe

Old Fashioned Bread Pudding

*Adapted from Betty Crocker's New Picture Cookbook
(1961)*

Ingredients

- 3 - 4 cups soft bread pieces* (4 cups will give a firmer pudding)
- 2 cup milk, scalded with 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon or nutmeg
- 1/2 cup raisins

Directions

*For bread pieces, tear day old bread into small (1/2" to 1") pieces with your fingers.

(cont'd. next page)

Bread pudding directions, continued from previous page.

Heat oven to 350F. Put a large, deep pan with one inch of water in the bottom to preheat. The pudding is steamed in a smaller dish placed in this pan, so make sure you have enough room to place your pudding pan in without the water running over the top.

Place bread pieces into a 1.5 quart greased baking dish.

In a medium bowl (or the saucepan you used to scald the milk), whisk together remaining liquid ingredients. Pour over bread pieces, add raisins and toss to mix.

Place the baking dish into your pan of hot water in the oven. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a knife inserted 1" from the edge comes out clean. Serve warm, with cream.

For chocolate bread pudding:

Make old-fashioned bread pudding, except substitute vanilla extract for the spices and semi-sweet chocolate chips or chunks for the raisins.



Swedish Limpa Bread

This recipe is courtesy of Letty Luhman, who inherited it from her aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Luhman. Mrs. Luhman won a baking contest in the Chicago Tribune with this recipe many years ago. The recipe was a family secret – because Mrs. Luhman never wrote it down – so Letty’s cousin stood next to her mother and carefully measured everything so the recipe could be passed on and stay a part of their family’s Christmas tradition.

This is a lightly sweet and spicy bread with a tender crumb. The recipe makes three large loaves, so it’s great for holiday gatherings. You will need a LARGE mixing bowl to have enough room to blend the ingredients and for the dough to rise.

The bread will get quite dark on the bottom during baking. Make sure it tests done, or you may end up some sticky dough in the center of the loaf. If you don’t trust your “tapping for doneness ear”, you can use a meat thermometer to make sure the internal temperate is 200-210°F.



Swedish Limpa Bread Ingredients

- 4 cups boiling water
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup shortening or butter
- 1/4 cup light corn syrup or brown rice syrup
- 1 1/2 teaspoons anise seeds
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grated orange rind
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon caraway seeds
- 2 packages active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup warm water (105-115°F / 38-46°C)
- 1 egg
- 5 cups rye flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon freshly crushed cardamom seeds
- 7 to 8 cups all purpose flour

Directions

Heat 4 cups of water to boil. Stir in molasses, shortening, corn syrup, anise seeds, orange rind, fennel, and caraway. Cool to lukewarm; set aside 1/3 cup of this mixture to brush on loaves after baking.

Sprinkle yeast over 1/4 cup warm water in large bowl. Stir until blended. Let stand 5 minutes to proof.

Add molasses mixture to yeast mixture. Mix until blended. Beat in egg. Mix in rye flour, sugar, salt, and cardamom. Stir until blended.

Swedish Limpa Bread directions, continued from previous page.

Add in all-purpose flour, one cup at a time, until dough no longer clings to side of bowl.

Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface. Knead dough until smooth and elastic, about 15 minutes.

Place finished dough into large greased bowl; turned greased side up. Cover and set in warm location to rise for about one hour, or until doubled in size.

Punch down dough and turn onto lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 3 parts. Shape each part into a smooth ball.

Place each ball in the center of a greased 8-inch round cake pan or pie plate. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about one hour or until doubled.

Bake at 350°F for 35-40 minutes, or until loaves sound hollow when tapped lightly. Remove from pans and place on wire racks. Brush immediately with reserved molasses mixture.



Dark Pumpernickel Rye Bread

I always associate pumpernickel rye bread with holidays and parties, where it is often paired up with spinach or artichoke dip. You can purchase long, skinny bread pans to make something that resembles a store cocktail loaf, or simply roll the dough into a long loaf. Another alternative is the classic round loaf, which for parties is hollowed out and filled with the dip. The pieces cut out of the middle are served alongside the bread bowl.

The dark color of the bread comes from a combination of coffee, cocoa and dark molasses, and the addition of onion gives it a little punch of flavor. This distinctive taste and texture also means that it pairs well with fermented and spicy condiments such as pickles, kimchee, hot mustard and horseradish – and of course, sauerkraut in a Reuben sandwich.



Dark Pumpernickel Rye Bread

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup+ plus 1 tablespoon brewed coffee (room temperature)
- 1 tablespoon melted butter
- 1 tablespoon dark molasses
- 1 1/4 cups bread flour
- 2/3 cups medium rye flour
- 4 teaspoons cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons (2/3 package) active dry yeast or 3/4 teaspoon SAF-INSTANT yeast

Directions

In a medium mixing bowl, blend together coffee, butter and molasses. Add in 1/2 cup bread flour, cocoa powder, sugar, salt, onion powder, and yeast. Mix thoroughly.

Gradually add rye flour and enough of the remaining bread flour to make a firm dough. Knead on floured surface 5-7 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Use additional bread flour if needed.

Place dough in lightly oiled bowl and turn to grease top. Cover and let rise until dough has roughly doubled in size, about one hour. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface and shape into a round or long loaf, as desired.

Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet, long loaf pan, or in an 8-inch layer cake pan or pie tin.

Pumpernickel rye directions, continued from previous page.

Cover and let rise in warm place until indentation remains after touching (about 30 minutes). Bake in preheated 400°F oven for 30-35 minutes. Loaf should sound hollow when tapped. Remove from pan and allow to cool on wire rack before slicing.

Green Garden Dip

The flavor on this dip is similar to a popular commercial spinach dip, but this variation uses more of your fresh garden or farmers market produce.

Ingredients

Adapted from Too Many Tomatoes

- 1 cup chopped cooked spinach
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup minced chives or green onion
- 1/2 cup minced fresh parsley
- 1/4 teaspoon dried dill weed or 1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Fresh lemon to taste

Directions

In a medium bowl or food processor, mix together all ingredients until well blended. Chill for at least an hour before serving for best flavor. Makes three cups.

This dip pairs well with fresh vegetables or as a spread for your pumpernickel rye bread.

For an even heartier spread, finely chop 1/2 cup each of carrots and broccoli and blend them into the dip.



Duncan's “Meat in a Loaf”

A while back, my youngest requested “meatloaf” for supper. I was somewhat surprised, as I was not aware that he liked meatloaf. To make sure we were both talking about the same food item, I described the dish that I thought he was requesting – ground beef, bread crumbs, eggs, seasonings, all baked together in a loaf shape.

As it turns out, it was a good thing I asked, because he had something entirely different in mind. What he was looking for was meat in a loaf, that is, meat inside a loaf of bread. I had thrown something together like this when I ended up serving a crowd unexpectedly and wanted to stretch some leftover spaghetti sauce into a meal.

This is a great option for leftovers that wouldn't be enough for a meal on their own, especially if you pair the bread up with fresh salad or other easy veggie side dishes.



Duncan's Meat in a Loaf

Ingredients

- Enough raw bread dough to make two loaves of bread. I'd suggest a double batch of the Basic Sandwich Bread or French Bread.
- Leftover meat sauce, 1 to 1 1/2 cups per loaf
- Shredded cheese, about one cup per loaf

Directions

Our “go to” combination of meat and cheese is leftover spaghetti sauce or sloppy Joes paired up with cheddar or mozzarella. I've also used chicken broccoli Alfredo sauce with mozzarella.

To form the loaves, roll the dough into a rectangle about 9”x 13”. Spread your fillings down the center third of the dough, meat first, then cheese on top. Stay about one inch away from the narrow ends of the rectangle.

Fold both sides of the dough in towards the center, pinch to seal (think “closing a purse,” not “rolling a jelly roll”). You want to end up with a long, narrow loaf.

Place loaves side by side on a large baking sheet that has been greased or covered with reusable parchment paper.

Allow to rise until about double in size. When dough is almost ready to bake, preheat oven to 350°F.

Bake loaves 30-35 minutes, until evenly browned. Cool for 10 minutes before slicing and serving. Best served warm.

Duncan's Favorite

Sloppy Joes

One of my youngest's favorite meals, and simple enough that he learned to make it himself when he was quite young. Even finicky eaters tend to like this recipe.

Ingredients

*Adapted from Betty Crocker's New Picture Cookbook
(1961)*

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 4 pounds ground beef
- 14 ounces ketchup
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Lawry's Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard

Directions

Sauté onion in butter. Add ground beef; brown lightly. Drain off excess fat, if needed. Add the rest of ingredients and simmer, covered, for around 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Use to fill 30 to 40 hamburger buns.

This recipe is easily cut in half if you want to make a smaller batch, but it also freezes and freeze dries very well if you want to make a full batch and stash some for later.



Coconut Flour Bread

(Gluten Free)

For those on a low carb or gluten free diet, coconut flour is often a staple in the kitchen. That said, in the interest of full disclosure, it's not my favorite ingredient. The baked goods made with coconut flour tend to be dry, or use large amounts of eggs (or both).

If you need to watch your carbohydrate intake because of health reasons and you don't want to take in a large amount of omega 6 fatty acids and calories from nut flours, coconut flour is a solid choice.

I like this recipe because it's simple and only uses a half carton of eggs instead of an entire carton. It's also doesn't have any gums or other funky ingredients. Sweetening is minimal, again helping it to stay low in carbohydrates.

If you don't have coconut milk available and can eat dairy, full fat cow's milk may be substituted. If your coconut milk has separated in the can, mix before using.



Coconut Flour Bread Ingredients

Adapted from Chocolate and Carrots

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup coconut flour
- 1/4 cup coconut milk
- 1/2 cup coconut oil, butter or ghee, softened
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 2 tablespoons honey or brown rice syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease an 8-inch or 9-inch loaf pan.

It's helpful to have all ingredients at room temperature so that your coconut oil doesn't clump in the batter.

In a medium bowl, mix all ingredients together. If your coconut milk has separated, mix before measuring out correct amount.

Spread batter into pan. It will be fairly thick. You can smooth the surface with a wet spatula if you like, for a prettier finish on the bread.

Bake for 45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

To Gluten or Not to Gluten?

Recent diet best sellers like *Wheat Belly* and *Grain Brain* have sold millions of copies promoting the idea that gluten is the devil - but other sources contradict these claims.

Extremely low carb diets may help address certain neurological disorders, but may cause problems for people with other conditions. For instance, since insulin is required to convert inactive T4 to active T3 hormone in the intestine, very low carbohydrate diets may make hypothyroidism worse. Pregnant women and athletes may also be negatively affected by low carb diets.

There's no clear correlation between eating gluten and better or worse health in the general population. For instance, the French eat significantly more bread than Americans, but have a lower incidence of chronic health issues. Maybe their bread products are better quality?

There have recently been studies with yet another new diet called the MIND diet, which includes 3 daily servings of whole grains along with plenty of green leafy vegetables, other veggies, nuts, berries, beans, fish, poultry, olive oil and wine. Initial results showed that this diet reduced Alzheimer's risk by as much as 53% in those who followed it exactly, and 35% in those who followed it moderately well. It's not just the bread, it's everything you eat.

While it's true that those with leaky gut syndrome, celiac disease and related health issues may benefit greatly, going gluten free isn't necessarily a panacea for everyone. Many of the gluten free foods found at the grocery store are still filled with a ton of sugar and/or highly processed ingredients. Gluten free junk food is still junk food.

When I had my allergy testing done, I didn't react to gluten or gluten containing grains. When I paid attention to how my gut and stomach felt after eating gluten containing products, I found that any stomach upset or other symptoms correlated with commercial grain products - like store bought items eaten at a family party to be polite. I've noticed no gastrointestinal distress from home baked products.

If this is the case, why do I still avoid gluten? Because I have an autoimmune disease, I have a higher risk for leaky gut. So I limit my exposure and work to rebuild a healthier microbiome in my belly. Eating less breads also means more room for veggies, which means a greater variety of nutrients in my diet. When I eat any sort of grain - gluten free or not - I make my choices mindfully, try to stick to "the good stuff" and don't overindulge.



Brazilian Cheese Bread

(Also known as Pao de Queijo - Gluten Free)

I was out to lunch with some homeschooling mom friends, and as usual, the conversation turned to food. Our little homeschooling group has a number of members with food allergies and sensitivities, including several of us who are currently avoiding gluten.

We discussed the pros and cons of various gluten free flour blends, options for avoiding the need for flour altogether, and what to do for a gluten free hamburger bun option. “Look up Brazilian Cheese Bread”, said my friend, Robyn. “That’s become our go to recipe for gluten free buns or bread.”



Since I hadn’t found a gluten free bun recipe that knocked my socks off to date, I checked it out. I’m glad I did! Gluten free or not, these little cheese rolls are tasty. They’re sturdy enough to hold up for use as a hamburger bun, with a slightly chewy, cheesy finish. I’ve eaten gluten free buns at a couple of restaurants, and frankly, I’d rather just skip the bun. The ones I’ve had have been terribly dry and chewy.

The Brazilian cheese bread buns were so popular with the boys that I had to make a double batch the next time around so I could have some buns left over for taking photos.

With a simple recipe like this, ingredient quality counts. Please use freshly grated cheese, not the pre-grated stuff in a can with mold inhibitor and cellulose.

Do take note that the recipe is mixed in stages, like cream puffs. If you dump everything in a bowl right away it makes a strange soup that can only be baked by pouring it into muffin tins. (Yes, I mixed without reading the directions the first time, but they were still good. They're just much better baked the correct way.)

Brazilian Cheese Bread Ingredients

Adapted from Allrecipes.com

- 1/2 cup butter or olive oil
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup milk or soy milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups tapioca flour
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (optional)
- 2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 beaten eggs

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Place butter, water, milk, and salt into a large saucepan, and place over high heat. When the mixture comes to a boil, remove from heat immediately, and stir in tapioca flour and garlic (if desired) until smooth.

Cheese bread directions, continued from previous page.

Set aside to rest for 10-15 minutes. While the dough is resting, you can grate the cheese if you haven't already.

Stir the cheese and egg into the tapioca mixture until well combined; the mixture will be chunky like cottage cheese.

Drop rounded, 1/4 cup-sized balls of the mixture onto an ungreased baking sheet. I use a small kitchen scoop to portion out the dough.

Bake in a preheated oven until the tops are lightly browned, 15-20 minutes. Move to wire rack to cool, or serve piping hot, fresh from the oven. Store the cheese bread in a sealed container.

Best if used within 24 hours. Recipe can be doubled or tripled.

Refrigerating Raw Dough

All yeast breads can be refrigerated to delay baking. (This is not recommended for most quick breads.) The cool temperatures of the refrigerator slows down the yeast but doesn't stop it completely. Bread dough can be stored in the refrigerator for up to three days, but quality is best if used within 48 hours.

To store your unbaked dough, finish kneading the bread dough and then place it in a well oiled bowl. Flip the dough in the bowl so it is covered with oil to prevent drying, and then cover the bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator.

The bread will rise slowly in the refrigerator, so punch down if needed during storage. The storage time counts as the first rise of the bread.

When you are ready to bake, remove desired amount of dough from the refrigerator, punch it down, and allow it to rest for 5-10 minutes before shaping. Take out only what you wish to bake and leave the rest in the refrigerator.

Form dough into the shape of your choice, place in pans and allow to rise until roughly double in size. Rise time will be slower due to the lower temperature of the dough. Bake according to recipe directions.

Dough may also be refrigerated after it has been shaped for baking. For instance, you can shape buns or rolls the night before to bake fresh for breakfast or brunch. Prep your dough in your pan, as you would for baking. Cover tightly with plastic wrap or place inside a larger sealed container and refrigerate up to 24 hours.

When ready to bake, remove unbaked loaves/rolls from refrigerator, loosen cover and place them in a warm location to finish rising and warm the pan. DO NOT PUT A GLASS OR STONEWARE PAN DIRECTLY FROM THE REFRIGERATOR TO THE OVEN. When dough has risen enough, bake according to recipe directions. Baking time may be slightly longer due to cooler dough temps.

Dough may also be frozen for longer storage, either raw or par-baked. (See page 69 for more information on freezing dough.) Due to the limits of home freezers compared to commercial blast chillers, it's best to stick to freezing dough as rolls. (Large, raw loaves do not freeze well.) Loaves keep better if they are frozen after being baked. [Click here for more information on bread storage after baking.](#)



Gluten Free Sandwich Bread

This is the first gluten free sandwich bread recipe that made my husband say, “It didn’t taste like gluten free.” This mix of flours gives a light loaf with a texture more like standard (with gluten) sandwich bread. It does contain refined flours, so this is not a low carb food, but it is tasty.

Since most of the family is still eating bread with gluten, when I bake a loaf, I slice and freeze the slices individually on a cookie sheet until firm. Then I vacuum seal the slices in two packs with a strip of wax paper between them for long term freezer storage. They’ll keep in the freezer for months in good condition when packaged this way.



Gluten Free Sandwich Bread

Ingredients

Adapted from Faithfully Gluten Free

- 1 cup warm milk, about 100°F / 38°C
- 2 teaspoons dry active or SAF-INSTANT yeast
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 cup millet flour
- 1/2 cup brown rice flour
- 1/2 cup potato starch (not flour)
- 1/4 cup almond meal
- 1/4 cup tapioca starch/flour
- 1/4 cup skim milk powder
- 1 tablespoon xanthan gum
- 1 – 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2-3 teaspoons sesame seeds (optional)

Directions

For stoneware loaf pans, grease the pans thoroughly. If using metal bakeware, grease and line the bread pan with parchment paper. If using silicone bakeware, no pre-prep is necessary.

Proof your yeast by combining the warm milk, yeast and honey in a small bowl. Let stand 5 minutes.

In a medium bowl or stand mixer, mix together dry ingredients - millet flour, brown rice flour, potato starch, almond meal, tapioca starch, milk powder, xanthan gum, and salt.

Gluten free sandwich bread directions, continued from previous page.

In a small bowl, whisk together wet ingredients - apple cider vinegar, butter, eggs and yeast mixture.

Turn mixer on low and add the wet ingredients a little at a time until mixed. If mixing by hand, add wet ingredients to dry a little at a time, stirring after each addition. Make sure to scrape the bottom of bowl to ensure there are no dry ingredients stuck to the bottom.

Mix on medium speed for 2-3 minutes, hand mixed until well blended. Spread the batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle with sesame seeds if desired.

Cover with flour sack cloth and place in a warm location to rise until dough reaches the top of the pan, about 30-40 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bake bread for 35-40 minutes, until lightly browned and internal temperature reaches 200°F. You can use an instant read thermometer to test doneness until you get a feel how long your oven takes to bake this recipe. When you stick the thermometer in, make sure it's in the middle of the loaf, not touching the pan.

Remove the bread from the pan and cool completely on a wire rack.

This bread behaves a little strangely when it comes out of the oven. It will be floppy instead of firm. To help it hold shape a little better, you can let it rest for 10 minutes on one side, and then flip to the other side to finish cooling.



Gluten Free Flatbread

I'm not a fan of crunchy tacos. Our family taco night is almost always soft shells, and the gluten free options I found before this recipe just weren't very good – dry and brittle but without the crunch.

This flatbread makes an acceptable taco substitute for a soft taco shell, soft bread for wraps, or even a crepe type “bread” for desserts if you add a little extra liquid and spread the batter thinly in the pan.

This recipe can be used to made two large flatbreads or six smaller flatbreads. They are delicious hot or cold, and very addictive!



Gluten Free Flatbread Ingredients

Adapted from My Heart Beets

- 1/2 cup almond flour
- 1/2 cup tapioca flour
- 1 cup organic coconut milk, canned and full fat
- Pinch of salt
- Coconut oil or grass-fed ghee, to lube the pan

Directions

In a medium bowl, blend all ingredients together. Note – if your coconut milk has separated, mix before using. Preheat skillet to medium heat, add oil to prevent sticking.

Pour batter in desired size and thickness. The almond and tapioca flour will take a while to cook, so be patient. Like a pancake, this bread will firm up around the edges and start to puff up when it's ready to flip.

Flip and cook until done.

Freezing Dough and Par-baked Breads

Unless you have a commercial blast chiller hiding in your pantry, freezing full sized raw bread loaves is not recommended - but you can still get away with freezing buns and rolls.

After the dough has been kneaded - before any rising - shape immediately into your desired bun or roll size. Place the rolls onto a baking sheet that has been greased or lined with a silicone mat or parchment paper.

Freeze until firm. Transfer to an airtight container (or vacuum seal) and return to freezer for up to two weeks.

To thaw the dough, place rolls in the refrigerator the night before you want to bake. One and a half to two hours before serving, remove rolls from the refrigerator and place on prepared pan. Allow to rise until doubled in size and bake according to the recipe.

Par-baking is another option for prepping rolls in advance and freezing. "Par-baking" simply means "partially baking". Since you par-bake after the bread has risen, you don't have to worry about damaging the yeast during freezing and thawing.

To par-bake rolls, prepare rolls according to your recipe of choice, but reduce the oven temperature to 275°F. Bake the rolls at 275°F for 25-35 minutes, until a crust has formed but they haven't started to brown. The baking time will depend on the size of the rolls. Remove from oven and place on a wire rack to cool. When cooled completely, store in an airtight container and freeze.

Remove rolls from freezer 60-90 minutes before serving. Place on baking sheet and allow to reach room temperature. Preheat oven to 375°F. Bake rolls for 10-15 minutes, until lightly browned.

Rolls and breads may also be reheated after baking. To reheat loaves or rolls that have already been cooked, wrap in aluminum foil and place in a 300°F oven for 10-20 minutes, until heated to your liking.

Dress it up! Slice bread or rolls and spread with softened garlic or [herb butter](#) before reheating to help prevent drying and add an extra punch of flavor.



Gram Irene's Cornbread

I got this recipe from my mom (Irene), after having tried it at her place and commenting on how good it was. The texture is great – really moist and tender, not dry and gritty. The “secret” is in the sour cream.

I'm sure you could make it with whole wheat flour, although I admit, I normally use white or a gluten free blend like Namaste. I recommend full fat dairy. Organic is great if you have it.

To make a double batch, simply double the recipe and bake in a 9”x 13” pan. With two teenage boys in the house, most of the time I make a double batch of bread with any bread that we make.

This bread also pairs well with soups and stews, especially bean and pea soups such as split pea.



Gram Irene's Cornbread

Ingredients

Dry Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour – all purpose or gluten free blend
- 1 cup corn meal
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (aluminum free)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

Wet Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons butter, softened (1/4 cup or half a stick)
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup whole milk
- 1 cup sour cream

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F and grease an 8-inch square or 9-inch round pan. I prefer glass bakeware.

Blend dry ingredients together. Mix in softened butter. Blend in milk, sour cream and egg. Beat until moist.

Pour into greased pan and place in preheated oven. Bake for 30-35 minutes, until the surface starts to crack and the edges pull away from the pan. If you are using heavy glass bakeware, it may take 5-10 minutes longer. The center should test dry with a toothpick.

Enjoy warm or at room temperature with butter, baked beans, soup or meal of your choice. Makes 16 servings.

Storage Tips for Baked Bread

When bread comes out of the oven, allow it to cool for a few minutes in the pan before moving to a wire rack to cool completely. Make sure your rack has good air circulation around and under the bread.

If humidity is high or the loaves are moist and the rack has little clearance underneath, condensation may form on the surface below the loaf, leading to soggy bread. I often prop my cooling rack up on top of the bread pan(s), or move the cooling racks around the counter as the bread cools.

Do not attempt to store bread until it has cooled completely, as it will continue to give off steam inside the storage container. This can make your bread soggy and/or chewy - a sad fate for a delicious loaf of homemade bread!

For tender crust breads, store at room temperature in an airtight container, like a plastic food storage bag or metal bread bin.

For crusty breads, like the French bread, keep in a paper or linen bag to allow the bread to breathe and keep the crust crisp. Airtight containers will make the crust more rubbery - which is still fine for applications like French toast or bread pudding.

Fresh bread is not loaded with preservatives like many commercial loaves, so it has a finite shelf life. With two teenage boys in the house, we normally don't have any problem eating a loaf before it gets moldy, but what do you do if you can't eat an entire loaf before it goes bad?

Refrigeration is not a good choice for bread. It will prevent mold, but speeds up a process called starch retrogradation - which makes your bread stale. Freezing is a better choice. You can store loaves whole or sliced in an airtight wrap or bag. Slices will dry out faster, and you may want to put parchment between them if you wish to use a slice at a time so they can be separated more easily.

Using your day old bread as the basis for another recipe is also a good way to jazz it up a little and give old bread new life. I've included recipes for [croûtons](#), [bread pudding](#) and [French toast](#) to help get you started.



Grandmom Murphy's

Southern Style Cornbread

I've taken some flack from southern readers who say a proper corn bread shouldn't be sweetened at all. Given that my momma was not a Southerner, I don't have a family recipe like that, but one of my readers (Gerald Murphy) was kind enough to share his.



Southern Style Cornbread Ingredients

- 2 cups self-rising corn meal*
- Approximately 1 1/4 cups of buttermilk (no substitutes, please)
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil (Gerald used corn oil, but any oil will work)

** 1 cup self-rising cornmeal =
1 cup plain cornmeal + 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
+ 1/2 teaspoon salt*

Directions

Blend all ingredients together in a medium mixing bowl. You can adjust the meal or buttermilk to get the right consistency of mix. It should be fully wet but not runny.

Oil a cast iron pan (I pour my vegetable oil in the pan, run it all around, and then pour it into the mix), scrape the mix into the pan, and shake the pan back and forth until it levels out.

Heat oven to 450°F and put pan in for approximately 20-25 minutes. You can see the underneath edges turning brown when it is almost done.

As soon as the top gets the least bit of brown on it turn the over to broil (careful now - this goes fast) until it is the shade of brown you like (usually about 2 to 2 1/2 minutes).

Note: I asked Gerald about substituting other fats, and he said bacon grease or butter would probably work fine.

Flavored Butters

While I'm a fan of butter in just about any form, flavored butters can be a fun way to add a new twist to your favorite bread recipe or dress loaves up for company.

To make a flavored butter, start with 1/2 cup butter (1 stick) at room temperature. You may use salted or unsalted - whichever you prefer. Whip the butter until fluffy with an electric mixer, or vigorously apply a sturdy whisk or hand crank egg beater.

Once the butter is light and fluffy, mix in herbs or other add-ins of your choice. Below are a few ideas to get you started, but feel free to experiment with your favorite flavors.

Savory Options

- 2 tablespoons minced parsley, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon sour cream and 1 teaspoon chives
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (1 teaspoon) and 1 1/2 tablespoon minced parsley
- 1 tablespoon sun dried tomatoes, finely chopped and 1/8 teaspoon oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, minced; 6 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup stone ground mustard (for pretzel dip)

Sweet Options

- 1/4 cup jam, preserves or fresh fruit and 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/3 cup fresh cranberries, 1/4 maple syrup, 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/2 cup honey and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

If you are lactose free, ghee can be substituted for butter. Plant based "cream cheese style" spreads can also be dressed up with herbs to improve the flavor and camouflage the texture differences. Coconut oil doesn't work very well for blending, although I have used it as a spread on toast with a sprinkle of cinnamon.



Classic Beer Bread

This was suggested as a “must include” recipe by one of our readers in the Common Sense Homesteading Facebook group.

You can't get much simpler bread than this – unless you substitute self-rising flour for the all-purpose flour, in which case you can skip the baking powder and sea salt.

This makes a yeasty loaf with a nice crunchy crust.



Classic Beer Bread Ingredients

- 3 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 12 ounces (1 1/2 cups) beer*
- 1/4 cup melted butter, divided

Directions

Lightly grease a 9"x 5" loaf pan.

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In a medium bowl, mix dry ingredients and beer. Stir in 3 tablespoons of butter.

Spread batter into greased loaf pan. Pour remaining butter over top of loaf. For a crunchier crust, don't mix any of the butter into the bread. Pour it all over the top of the loaf.

Bake loaf for 50-60 minutes. Remove from pan and place on wire rack. Cool for at least 15 minutes before slicing.

* If you wish to use a non-alcoholic beverage instead of beer, substitute 12 ounces of seltzer water.

Beer Bread Muffins

Need the bread to cook a little faster? Instead of baking it in a loaf pan, divide the batter evenly between 12 greased muffin cups. Bake for around 14-18 minutes, until the muffins test done. The toothpick test will come out dry, and muffins will spring back when pressed lightly in the center.

Beer Cheese Fondue

Ingredients

- 1 cup Pilsner style beer
- 1 lb melting cheese of your choice, shredded. Try Asiago, Cheddar, Colby, Fontina, Gouda, Gruyere, Havarti, Monterey Jack or Muenster - or a mix.
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- a pinch of cayenne pepper
- a dash of Worcestershire sauce

Directions

In a medium heavy bottomed saucepan, bring beer to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer.

In a medium bowl, toss shredded cheese and cornstarch. Add cheese mixture to beer gradually, stirring after each addition until completely melted. Stir in rest of ingredients.

Serve immediately with your choice of dippers. Refrigerate leftovers.

Some ideas for dippers include:

- Chunks of bread or pretzels
- Small cooked new potatoes
- Cooked meat such as sausage bites, ham, or chicken cubes
- Tart apples
- Veggies such as broccoli or cauliflower

Note - If meats or fresh fruits and veggies are used for dipping, the fondue is best consumed in one sitting to reduce risks of growing an inedible science experiment in your refrigerator.



Top Secret Banana Quick Bread

Everyone should be able to turn overripe bananas into moist and tasty banana bread. With this recipe, we have a couple of “secret ingredients” that add a little extra flavor and help keep it moist and tender. My youngest loves this one.

Using soured or cultured milk is one of the “tricks” that set this bread apart from other recipes. To sour pasteurized milk or fresh raw milk, add 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar to the 2/3 cup milk (at room temperature), and allow to stand for five minutes. Alternatively, you can use raw milk that has naturally soured. Do not use pasteurized milk that has gone bad. It rots instead of souring. If you have buttermilk or milk kefir available, feel free to substitute either.

Flax is our second somewhat unusual ingredient. It adds a subtle nutty flavor to the banana bread. Since my youngest doesn't care for nuts, I sprinkle them on top of one loaf only.



Top Secret Banana Quick Bread Ingredients

Adapted from The Quick-Bread Cook Book

- 2/3 cup butter, softened
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- 1 1/4 cups mashed ripe bananas, fresh or thawed
- 2/3 cup sour milk, buttermilk or milk kefir
- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1/4 cup ground flax
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup nuts (preferably crispy nuts *see below) or unsweetened coconut, optional

Crispy Nuts

Soaking and dehydrating nuts makes them easier to digest by reducing phytic acid and enzyme inhibitors. Soaking also reduces tannins, which make the nuts bitter, so soaked nuts have a milder, almost toasted flavor. I use them in baking and also enjoy them as snacks.

Ingredients

- 4 cups nuts - walnuts, pecans, almonds, peanuts or macadamia nuts
- 1 tablespoon salt
- Warm water to cover

To make crispy nuts, soak 4 cups nuts with a tablespoon of salt and enough warm water to cover for 7 hours or overnight. Drain nuts well and dehydrate at 125°F for around 24 hours. Always store nuts (crispy or otherwise) in the freezer to prevent rancidity.

Top Secret Banana Quick Bread

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F and grease two loaf pans. You may also want to put a strip of parchment paper in the bottom of the pans to help prevent sticking.

In a large bowl, cream together butter and sugar. Add in soured milk (or buttermilk or milk kefir) and mashed bananas and mix until smooth.

You could mix all your dry ingredients together in another bowl and then dump them into the wet ingredients, but I confess, I never bother. Instead, I add the flour, and then sprinkle the flax, the baking powder, the baking soda and the salt over the top of the flour. Once all the dry ingredients are in the bowl, then I mix everything together until just blended.

Mix in nuts or coconut if desired – or – wait until batter is in the pans and sprinkle some nuts or coconut on top. Pour into two loaf pans.

Bake for around 45-50 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean.

Store in a sealed container at room temp for several days, or freeze, well wrapped, for longer storage.

A note on freezing bananas...

If you're anything like me, you've grabbed your share of discounted overripe bananas at the grocery store over the years - or you've purchased a bunch of bananas, only to have your kids abruptly stop eating them.

Thankfully, bananas freeze quite well. They'll never look quite the same (they do get brown, especially those that are very ripe), but they work just fine for baking and making fruit sorbets.

To freeze, you can mash the amount of banana needed for a recipe and place it in a labeled freezer container. Alternatively, just peel the bananas and stick the whole thing in a plastic bag or freezer container and break off what you need for a recipe as you needed. Frozen bananas are also great blended with fresh berries or chilled coconut milk for an easy, healthy frozen treat.



Cheesy Garlic Zucchini Bread

Cheesy garlic zucchini bread is a recipe I make when summer squash are abundant. It's a quick bread recipe, not a yeast bread, so it goes together in a flash. The texture is nice and moist, and the garlic gives it real “pop”.

You may prefer to peel and seed overgrown zucchini, but it's not absolutely necessary. I don't peel or seed younger zucchini or summer squash (less than 10 inches long), but I do cut out the seedy, pulpy centers of the giants that escaped harvest and grew to the size of softball bats.

Make sure to take time to salt, drain and squeeze your zucchini well before mixing it into the batter, as very wet zucchini will make the bread heavy and require it to bake much longer to get done.



Cheesy Garlic Zucchini Bread Ingredients

Adapted from The Garden-Fresh Vegetable Cookbook

- 3 cups grated zucchini or summer squash
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, or whole wheat flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cups grated cheddar
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 3 large chicken eggs, beaten or 2 duck eggs, beaten – at room temp

Directions

Combine the zucchini and salt in a colander and toss to mix. Set aside to drain for 30 minutes. Squeeze out the excess water.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9”x 9” baking dish with butter or lard. (I use a 9”x 9” inch Pyrex dish and reduce the heat to 330°F.)

Stir together the flour and baking powder in a medium bowl. Add the onion, zucchini, cheese, garlic powder and pepper.

Mix well with a fork, breaking up any clumps of zucchini.

Cheesy garlic zucchini bread directions, continued from previous page.

Whisk together eggs and butter in a small bowl. Pour into the zucchini mixture and mix well.

Spread evenly in the baking dish.

Bake for about 35 minutes, until golden. You want the whole top golden and the entire pan cooked through, so don't be afraid to give it some extra time if needed. The batter is very thick and moist.

Let cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Cut into squares and serve warm or at room temperature. Makes 6-8 servings. Store the leftover cheesy bread in the refrigerator.

Bonus recipe

Tomato and Onion Salad

Ingredients

- 4 large tomatoes, sliced
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup minced fresh mint
- Salt and ground pepper to taste

Layer ingredients, cover and chill at least 2 hours. Pairs well with your cheesy zucchini bread.



Basic Flour Tortillas

I don't always make tortillas from scratch, but it is nice to have the option. (My favorite grocery store is about 20 minutes away, so it's not exactly convenient to pick up random items.) We use them for soft shell tacos and fajitas, and for my boys' favorite – quesadillas!

My youngest has been crowned “Quesadilla King” of the house for his prowess in converting the blank template of a tortilla into a cheesy, saucy snack (or meal). When we have leftover chicken or beef from a meal, quesadillas are one of the boys' favorite “leftover makeovers”. They were one of the first dishes that my guys learned to make on their own.



I have a lovely photo of the first one Dunc ever made – which was charred to black on the outside. He scraped off the char and enjoyed it anyway. (Waste not, want not.)

Since then, he's gotten much better, to the point where my husband will specifically request that he makes the quesadillas. (This may be a clever ploy to make sure the boys are involved with making dinner, but I'm not complaining.)

To make our homemade version of easy quesadillas, we plop a tortilla in a warm pan and top half of it with a mix of meat and salsa covered with shredded cheese. Then we place a lid on the pan and heat through until the cheese is melted. The tortilla is folded over the filling, lightly browned, sliced and enjoyed. It's easy enough for a teenage boy to master.

Basic Flour Tortilla Ingredients

- 4 cups white or whole wheat flour, or a mix of the two*
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder (optional)
- 1/3 cup lard, coconut oil or shortening
- 1 to 1-1/4 cups water

**Whole wheat flour will make the tortillas a little less flexible and more likely to break, so it may be easier to work with white flour first and gradually add more whole wheat as you become more experienced.*

Flour Tortilla Directions

Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. The baking powder is optional, but will make the tortillas lighter. Cut in the lard with a pastry blender or fork; mix until crumbly.

Add enough water to form a soft dough. You may need to use a little more or less depending on your flour, just don't get it too sticky. Knead the dough ball about 20 times. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Note: The dough may be made up to 24 hours ahead and left to “soak” in a sealed container in the refrigerator for better digestibility. (Soaking reduces phytates.) Bring chilled dough to room temperature before rolling.

Divide the dough into 10-12 equal balls. Let balls rest on a sheet of wax paper or clean, well-floured surface while rolling the rest of the balls.

Roll each ball into a 6-7 inch diameter circle, spreading the dough as thinly as possible. If I have room on the counter, I may roll out several of the tortillas before I start cooking, so I can keep them moving in and out of the pan quickly.

Carefully lift tortilla and place into a hot, dry skillet. Cook 30 seconds to 2 minutes, until pan side is dry with a few brown spots. Flip and cook the second side in a similar manner.

Place the finished tortilla in a sealed container or large food storage bag. Repeat the process with the rest of the tortillas.

Note: Homemade tortillas will be less flexible than store tortillas. To help make them more pliable, place them in a covered container or sealed plastic storage bag as they finish cooking and allow them to sit in the steam. This recipe makes 10-12 tortillas.



Basic Biscuits

When I was a young bride, I used to keep a container of commercial biscuit mix in the cupboard. Now I'm happy to say I haven't had an urge to buy one in many years. No more bleached flour, hydrogenated genetically modified oils and shelf stabilizers.

Instead I just hit the pantry for basic ingredients and whip up a batch when needed, which allows me to save money and to know what's going into our food.

Home made warm biscuits from the oven are a hit with the family!



Basic Biscuit Ingredients

Adapted from Betty Crocker's New Picture Cookbook

- 2 cups white flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup lard, butter or shortening
- 3/4 cup milk

Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. Cut in the lard with a pastry blender or fork; mix until crumbly. Stir in almost all the milk. Add enough milk to make the dough pliable but not sticky. Knead dough gently until just combined, about 20 times. Overworking the dough will make your biscuits tough.

Roll dough or pat out flat to about 1/2 inch thick. Cut into circles with floured biscuit cutter, or slice into rectangles. Form leftover bits into another biscuit. Do not knead dough again or it will get tough.

On an ungreased baking sheet, place biscuits close together in pan for biscuits with soft sides, place one inch apart for biscuits with crusty sides.

Place pan on center oven rack and bake 12-15 minutes, until lightly browned. Best served warm. Makes around twenty 1 3/4-inch biscuits.

To make drop biscuits: Increase milk to 1 cup. Drop from spoon onto a greased pan or greased muffin cups.

Chicken and Dumplings

Ingredients

- 1 medium/large onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced or run through a garlic press
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 1 large potato (2 cups chopped)
- 2 carrots (2 cups chopped)
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1-2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 cup peas
- 1 cup cooked chicken, diced
- 1 cup water mixed with 1/2 cup flour or 1/4 cup cornstarch (for thickening)
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 batch drop biscuit dough

Directions

In a large stockpot, sauté onions and garlic in butter until glossy and tender. Add broth, carrots and potato. Cook until tender. Add celery, parsley, peas and chicken.

Mix flour and water (or cornstarch) to form a slurry. Bring broth mixture to gentle boil. Pour flour/water mix into broth, stirring constantly, until broth thickens into gravy.

To add biscuit dumplings: Drop biscuit dough into simmering stew by the spoonful, until all batter is in the pot. Cover and cook until center of dumpling tests done, about 5 minutes.

Sometimes I bake a batch of biscuits and serve the stew over the top of the biscuits, sometimes I cook drop the biscuits right in the stew as directed above. It depends on how hungry the boys are and what else I'm serving for dinner.



Pancakes

DO PANCAKES COUNT AS A QUICK BREAD? My Betty Crocker Cookbook says so, therefore it must be true. Back in the day, I used the infamous biscuit mix to make pancakes, and I know plenty of people who still “hit the box” when they want to make pancakes at home. There's no need to, as homemade pancakes are easy to make and inexpensive.

It really doesn't take more than a couple extra minutes to start from basic ingredients instead of a mix, and you can taste the difference. I don't care to eat pancakes away from home anymore because they always have a slight metallic flavor to me. Maybe it's the aluminum in the baking powder (I use aluminum free), maybe it's something else. Either way, I can taste it, and I don't like it.

Another fun fact – most pancake recipes I've tried also make a good waffle, and vice versa. The only time I've run into trouble is with recipes that are higher in sugar, such as pumpkin pancakes, or those with fruit mixed into the batter. Those tend to stick in my waffle iron.



Pancake Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour or gluten free flour blend
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- Butter, lard or coconut oil, to grease pan

Directions

In a medium bowl, whisk together dry ingredients. Add liquid ingredients and whisk until smooth.

Heat your skillet to around 300-350°F. If cooking on a stove top, get your pan about the same temperature you'd have it if you were frying eggs – medium high heat. Grease griddle or pan.

Pour or ladle batter on the hot skillet using about 1/4 cup per pancake. Cook until edges firm and pancake starts to bubble. Flip and cook until evenly browned. Remove from pan. Add more fat as needed to keep pancakes from sticking, and continue frying until all batter is cooked.

You can use less batter to make silver dollar pancakes, or more to make massive “plate filling” pancakes – just adjust cooking time accordingly. Serve immediately or hold on a baking sheet in a warm oven until ready to serve.

French Toast

Another breakfast favorite, French toast can be made with many of the bread recipes in this book. Not surprisingly, French bread works best. Older bread holds up better to being dipped in egg.

Ingredients

- 2 beaten eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 6 slices of day old bread

Whisk together eggs, milk and spices in a small, flat bottomed container. Dip bread, flipping to coat completely. Brown on both sides in butter on a hot griddle. Serve hot with your choice of toppings - or nothing at all. I used to cut the finished French toast slices into strips for serving when the boys were little so they could dip them in syrup.



Popovers

My first experience with popovers was in junior high home economics class. I only took home ec in junior high, not high school, since much of my time away from school was in the kitchen anyway. Mom was a better cook than the home ec teacher.

Back to the popovers...



I had never eaten a popover before attempting to make them, and my past experience with batters led me to assume that the popover batter should be well blended. Big mistake. I beat the stuffing out of that popover batter and baked up some seriously ugly little hockey pucks. After the fact, the teacher mentioned that the dough was supposed to be mixed gently, but by then the damage was done.

Learn from my mistake. Popover batter should be mixed until just blended – no more. This batter will be quite runny – that’s normal, don’t get worried.

I really like my stoneware muffin pan, but use what you have – just make sure your pan is well greased.

If you don’t have enough batter to fill an entire pan, fill the outside cups first, then the inside cups, especially with a stoneware muffin pan. The outside cups will bake a little faster than the inside cups, which can lead to slightly underdone centers if you’re not careful. These under-baked popovers are still edible; they just tend to deflate as they cool.

When baked correctly, your popovers should resemble a savory cream puff – light and airy with a hollow center. You can serve them with a meal as a dinner roll, or fill them with a creamed sea food or meat dish. Best served warm, straight out of the oven.

Popover Ingredients

Adapted from Betty Crocker’s New Picture Cookbook

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Grease muffin tins or custard cups thoroughly. This recipe will make 5-9 popovers, depending on the size.

Popover directions, continued from previous page.

In a medium bowl, beat all ingredients with a rotary beater or by hand, just until smooth. **Do not mix too much, or your popovers won't pop up!**

Pour batter into greased muffin/custard cups. Fill muffin cups to 3/4 full, or custard cups to 1/2 full. Bake 40-45 minutes, until puffed and browned. Serve promptly.

Bonus recipe - whole wheat crackers!

My husband suggested I include a cracker recipe in the book with the line, "Crackers are like flat little bread, right?" You can re-roll the edge dough to make prettier crackers, but I usually just let my boys eat the evidence of any less than perfect crackers.

"Wheat Thin" Style Crackers Ingredients

Adapted from Kitchen Stewardship

- 1 ¼ cups whole wheat flour
- 1 ½ Tbs honey (or sugar)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp paprika
- 4 Tbs butter
- ¼ cup water
- ¼ tsp vanilla
- salt for topping

"Wheat Thin" Style Cracker Directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Blend together flour, honey, paprika and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cut in butter with a knife or pastry blender and blend until evenly mixed. Combine the water, honey (or sugar) and vanilla. Add to flour mixture and blend until smooth. Divide the dough into four pieces and chill for at least one hour before rolling for easier handling.

Roll out the dough one quarter at a time on parchment paper or reusable parchment. Try to get the dough as thin as possible, at least 1/16 inch thick and 12 inches square. Use a pizza cutter or sharp knife to cut into squares about 1 1/2 inch wide. Move parchment onto baking sheet.

Sprinkle lightly with salt . Bake the crackers, one sheet at a time, until crisp and browned, 5 to 10 minutes. You can remove edge crackers from the pan if they start getting too dark and return the rest to the oven to bake.

Crackers are done when they are almost crispy but not too brittle. They will crisp more as they cool. Cool completely and store in an airtight container.



Kolache

Kolache, kolace, kolach, or kolacky – No matter how you spell it, just about everyone enjoys these tasty treats. My momma taught me how to make kolache the way I do in this recipe, but there are many different shapes, sizes and fillings. From rounds to folded pockets, hand sized to pie-sized, sweet to savory - your imagination is the limit.

Most sources seem to agree that the name “kolache” (however you spell it) comes from the Czech word for “cookie”. As for the origin of kolache, no one is really certain, but this story from the Polish Art Center is sweet:

“The origin of the kolache is uncertain. One version goes like this:

A mother, busy with her weekly baking, broke off a few pieces of dough to keep her little daughter occupied. The little cook kneaded her dough into flat cakes. She selected several plums from a bowl on the table and placed the fruit into the center of the round piece of dough. Her cake went into the oven along with Mother’s bread.

The father, coming in from a long day in the fields, picked up the cake cooling on the table and took a bite. The hot juice of the plum spurted into his mouth, causing him to hop around on one foot around the table. The little girl shouted with glee saying, ‘Tatinek (father).. kolac’. And that’s how kolache got its name. Soon the fame of the kolache spread throughout the Czech-Austro-Hungarian Empire and on to the New World.”

My recipe is from my mother’s mother, Mary, who was of Czech heritage. When my mother was a young girl, she left school after the eighth grade (not uncommon in those days) to start working. Her first job was to do the weekly baking for a neighbor with a large family and a new baby.



Back then, all the farm families did baking once a week and that baking usually involved kolache, at least in the area around Haugen, Wisconsin where mom grew up.

Mom was pretty nervous on her first day, but she finished the kolache and waited for the husband to try them when she was done. He took his first bite, got a bit of a questioning look on his face, picked up the salt shaker and sprinkled a bit of salt on the pastry and ate the rest. “Not too bad”, he said. (Yes, mom had forgotten the salt in the dough.)

Since then, my mom probably baked several thousand kolache. We always had kolache for the holidays, and fairly often during the rest of the year when there were more of us at home. We used to make them sometimes for the catering business, too.

Now I generally only bake them for the holidays, as I have cut back on our sweets, but I still want to make sure this family tradition gets passed on to the next generation.

Kolache Ingredients

- 2 cups warm milk
- 2 packages dry yeast (4 1/2 teaspoons) or 3 1/2 teaspoons SAF-INSTANT yeast
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 beaten eggs
- 3/4 cup lard or poultry fat, melted, plus extra for coating dough
- 5 to 6 cups all-purpose flour

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Using a large bowl (you can do this in a stand mixer with a dough hook, or by hand), dissolve yeast and milk. Add sugar and salt, let set until bubbles form (about 10 minutes).

Mix in lard or poultry fat, eggs, and 1 cup of flour. Add the rest of the flour slowly, beating after each addition, to form a soft dough. You want it to be a bit sticky.

Cover with a towel. Let rise in a warm place until dough doubles in size.

Punch down dough and cut into golf ball sized pieces. Grease your hands before working with the dough, as it will be sticky. Roll the dough into balls about 1 inch across.

Place the balls on a well-greased pan or pan lined with parchment paper or reusable parchment paper and brush balls with melted oil. Let rise until dough has doubled in size.

Kolache directions, continued from previous page.

Press down the centers of the balls with your fingers to form a depression, then fill depression with fruit fillings. Use pie fillings such as: blueberry, peach, apple, raspberry, prune, applesauce, poppy seed, lemon and apricot. You can use commercially prepared fillings, but most of the time I make my own. (See filling recipes that follow.) Try to fill them about level, not too full, or they will run all over.

Bake at 375°F until light golden brown, about 10-12 minutes. Do not overbake! Remove from pan to cool on a wire rack. Makes around six dozen.

Store the kolache in a sealed container at room temperature. These are best if eaten within a few days of baking.

Kolache may be frozen for up to a month. Place wax paper between layers of kolache to keep them from sticking together.

Filling Recipes for Kolache

Dry Fruit Filling

For prunes, peaches or apricots

Cook 2 pounds of dry fruit in enough water to cover until tender. Drain and pit if necessary.

Blend fruit with 1/2 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla and/or 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon.

Applesauce Filling

Use 1/4 cup tapioca granules for every four cups of applesauce.
Add cinnamon and sweetener to taste.

Fresh or Frozen Fruit Filling

Ingredients

- 1 quart fresh or frozen fruit such as raspberries, cherries, peaches, etc.
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 1/4 cups sugar
- Pinch of salt

Directions

In a small bowl, mix sugar, cornstarch and salt together.

Combine all ingredients in top of double boiler, cook until thick stirring often. Allow the filling to cool.

If cooking in regular pan be careful not to scorch your fruit.

Be sure to premix your sugar and cornstarch, or you're likely to get lumps.



Grandma Catherine's **Polish Doughnuts**

These doughnuts were made from the recipe that my mother used for around 50 years of church bake sales. The recipe originally came from my father's mother, Grandma Catherine Poplawski.

I have some of Grandma's hand written cookbooks, but wasn't able to find this recipe in the bunch. (I did find a lot of recipes that included the word "surprise", which made me a little nervous.) Luckily my sister still had mom (grandma's) recipe.

When I was still at home as a girl and a teenager, I used to help out with the Easter Bake Sale, where mom and the other ladies from the parish would bake tens of dozens of these beauties. (Think multiple 50 pound bags of flour and 4+ large folding tables full of finished doughnuts.) People would come from all over the surrounding area just to get "those good doughnuts".



Polish Doughnuts Ingredients

Doughnuts:

- 1 pint of milk, warm or scalded
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 package (2 1/4 teaspoons) dry active yeast
- 6-7 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Doughnut Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2-3 tablespoons milk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Directions

Scald the milk. To scald milk: Place milk in a heavy-bottomed pan on low heat. Stir occasionally until milk is just hot with steam and small bubbles appear around the edges; do not boil. Remove from the heat. Add butter to warm milk and stir until melted.

Allow butter and milk to cool until it is just warm (around 110-115°F). Add yeast and 2 cups flour. Mix well. Allow to rest for around 10 minutes to give the yeast time to “proof” or activate. The mix should be starting to bubble.

Pour flour/milk mix into mixing bowl. Add egg, yolks, sugar, salt and vanilla. Mix well.

Doughnut directions, continued from previous page.

Start adding the rest of the flour, one cup at a time, mixing after each addition, until you have slightly sticky dough. Dump dough onto lightly floured counter top to knead in the last of the flour.

Depending on the humidity levels, you may not need all the flour called for in the recipe. You want the dough to be soft and elastic, not too stiff. Don't overwork it or you'll develop the gluten too much and your doughnuts will be tough.

Grease your bowl and gently coat your dough with oil. Cover and set in a warm place and let rise until double. While dough is rising, prep your frying oil. A deep fryer is great if you have one. I use an eight quart heavy bottom pot. I put in enough local, non-hydrogenated lard to fill the pot around 3-4 inches deep.

When the dough has doubled in size, roll out to about 1/3 inch thick and cut out doughnuts. We used a large glass for the doughnut and an empty decorator sprinkle container for the holes. Let rise until double in size.

Heat the lard to 340-365°F for frying. Drop 3-4 doughnuts into the frying oil, keeping an eye on your frying temp. Cook until brown on one side, flip and brown on the other side.

Remove doughnuts from frying oil and drain on a wire rack sitting over a paper grocery bag. Mix all donut glaze ingredients together. Dip the donuts in glaze or sugar while still warm, if desired.



Gram Irene's

Cinnamon Rolls

THESE ROLLS ARE A FAMILY FAVORITE that mom used to bake for most holidays, along with kolache and rolache. Later mom also added Hungarian rolls. Christmas time would have Polish tea rings.

I bake less than Mom did, but special occasions call for special recipes and memories of family traditions. Sometimes I make these as Caramel-Pecan Cinnamon Rolls, with a caramel sauce baked in the bottom of the pan; usually, I just make them with icing because my boys like them better that way.

Depending on how much your dough has risen, you might need to divide it between two pans. I have a glass pan that's slightly larger than 13"x 9", and it usually holds all of the rolls, but once in a while I need to bake a few in a separate baking dish.



Gram Irene's Cinnamon Rolls

Ingredients

Dough:

- 2 packages (1/4 ounce each) active dry yeast (4 1/2 teaspoons)
- 1 cup warm milk (110-115°F)
- 2 eggs
- 5 tablespoons butter, lard or rendered poultry fat, melted
- 1/2 cup pure cane sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 5 cups all-purpose flour

Filling:

- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 3/4 cup pure cane sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

Caramel Sauce:

- 1 cup butter, cubed
- 2 cups packed brown cane sugar
- 1/4 cup honey or GMO free corn syrup
- 1/2-3/4 cup chopped pecans

Icing:

- 1 cup confectioners sugar (powdered sugar)
- 1/3 cup butter, softened
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (homemade vanilla extract is great if you have it)
- 1-2 teaspoons whipping cream or milk, or more for a thinner glaze

Cinnamon Roll Directions

To prepare the dough:

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm milk. Add the eggs, butter (or lard or poultry fat), sugar, salt and 3 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn onto a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes. (You could also use the dough cycle on your bread machine, or mix with something like the Bosch Kitchen Machine or the dough hook on a heavy duty KitchenAid stand mixer.)

Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour. While the dough is rising, prep your caramel sauce or icing.

Directions for caramel sauce:

Melt butter in a large saucepan. Stir in brown sugar and corn syrup (or honey). Bring to a boil over medium heat for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

Pour into a greased 13"x9" baking dish. Sprinkle with pecans; set aside.

Directions for icing:

In a small bowl, blend together powdered sugar, butter and vanilla. Add cream or milk to thin as much as you like.

Cover bowl with a lid, damp cloth or plastic wrap to keep it from getting crusty while you finish the rolls. If you are using frosting and skipping the caramel sauce, grease a 13"x9" baking dish and set aside.

To assemble the rolls:

Punch the dough down. Turn onto a floured surface. Roll into a 17"x 15" rectangle. Spread butter to within 1/2-inch of edges. Combine sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over dough.

Roll up jelly-roll style, starting with a long side; pinch seams to seal. Cut into 16 slices.

Place cut side down over caramel sauce (or in greased pan). Cover; let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes.

OR

If you want to prep these the night before to bake fresh in the morning, cover your pan with plastic wrap and place the rolls in the refrigerator overnight.

In the morning, remove from the refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature and finish rising. Don't put a glass pan straight from the refrigerator to the oven!

Once rolls have finished rising:

Bake at 350°F for 30-35 minutes or until golden brown. Glass pans will take longer to bake, metal pans will go a little faster.

For caramel rolls, let stand 5 minutes; invert onto a serving platter. For iced rolls, allow to cool slightly in pan, and then pour icing over rolls.

Monkey Bread

Cinnamon Rolls' Country Cousin

Monkey bread, otherwise known as cinnamon pull apart bread, can be made with any mild flavored bread or even biscuit dough. (I'd suggest the basic sandwich bread or potato bread.)

I like to use a loaf pan for convenience. I make a double batch of bread, bake one or two loaves plain (depending on the size of the recipe), and turn the extra loaf into monkey bread.

Ingredients

- Raw dough, enough for a single loaf of bread.
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

Directions

Chop dough into roughly 1/2" pieces.

Mix together cinnamon and sugar. Toss dough pieces in cinnamon sugar to coat.

Layer dough into a well greased 9"x5" loaf pan. Drizzle with melted butter. Allow to rise until double in size (or bake immediately if using biscuit dough).

Bake 30-35 minutes at 350°F.

Invert onto serving platter and enjoy warm.

Baking with Love

Hopefully over the course of this book you've learned that bread is more than just those bland, white, preservative-laden, pre-sliced loaves you find at the grocery store.

Home bread baking is an art and labor of love. The taste and aroma of fresh baked goods welcomes guests and families to gather around and enjoy their time together, savoring the experience. Sharing homemade baked goods and baking duties creates wonderful memories that will last a lifetime.

Whole grains, such as wheat berries, store much better than flours or finished bread. Grains can stay edible for years, even decades. In an emergency, we often see bread and milk fly off the shelves. With basic pantry staples, you don't have to worry about going without or fighting the crowds to provide for your family. Combine your whole grains with a grain mill and basic bread baking skills, and grain is an affordable and useful addition to long term food storage.

I hope you've enjoyed this book, and found in it inspiration to expand your bread baking horizons.

Laurie Neverman

February 2017



Learn More

Free e-book - "Common Sense Homesteading 101 - 7 Steps to Become More Self-Reliant Now"

Free for all of our newsletter subscribers! Includes 101 homestead project ideas and helpful checklists to get you started.

You can sign up now at <http://commonsensehome.com/subscribe/>.

You can also access a video featuring how to bake the basic sandwich bread from start to finish at <http://commonsensehome.com/bread-video/>.

If you'd like an excellent sourdough reference, I highly recommend the e-book and Video Package, "[Sourdough A to Z](#)" by my friend, Wardee Harmon, of Cooking Traditional Foods.

For those who want low carb/paleo friendly bread alternatives, my friend, Starlene Stewart, of GAPS diet journey has an e-book titled, "[Mastering the Art of Baking with Coconut Flour](#)" that includes another coconut flour sandwich bread recipe as well as other coconut flour recipes and tips for converting your favorite recipes.

On my website, Common Sense Homesteading, I share information on a variety of self-reliance topics. Each main topic area has all related posts listed on a single page for easy reference. Some of these include:

Recipes and Kitchen Tips - <http://commonsensehome.com/recipes/>

100+ made from scratch recipes - canning and preserving recipes, main dishes, side dishes, soups and stews, breads and crackers, cakes, cookies, brownies, snacks, cheeses, live culture foods.

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40+ articles featuring seed starting, seed sources, wildcrafting, soil testing, growing transplants, specific crops, vertical gardening/trellising and more.

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Homesteading - <http://commonsensehome.com/homesteading/>

Homesteading resources from general "how tos" to animal husbandry to using cast iron, skills you need to learn.

Common Sense Preparedness - <http://commonsensehome.com/preparedness/>

30+ preparedness articles to help you prepare for everyday emergencies - food and water, emergency power, cold weather, health, first aid and more.

Herbs and Wildcrafting - <http://commonsensehome.com/wildcraftingweekly-weeder/>

It's amazing to find out what's waiting right in your backyard. You can read about how to identify and use over 40 common weeds in the Weekly Weeder series.

Green Home - <http://commonsensehome.com/green-home/>

Information on our Energy Star, Green Built certified home; plus how to use solar for electricity, space and water heating; green home products, books and pest control.

My "Common Sense Home Good News Letter" shares snippets of our daily life, seasonal topics and special subscriber offers.

All our subscribers can download a copy of the e-book "Homesteading 101 – 7 Steps to Become More Self-Reliant Now" free with their subscription.

You can sign up now at <http://commonsensehome.com/subscribe/>. I'd love for you to join us!

Other Books by Laurie Neverman

Common Sense Home Remedies Book #1 – Skin Troubles

Provides help for Sunburn, Bites and Stings, Dry Skin, Warts, Acne & Sliver Removal.

Common Sense Home Remedies Book #2 – Tummy Troubles

Provides help for Upset Stomach, Acid Reflux, Stomach Flu, Constipation, Diarrhea & Gas.

Common Sense Home Remedies Book #3 – Head, Throat and Chest

Provides help for Headaches, Earaches, Canker Sores, Congestion, Sore Throat, Coughs & Seasonal Allergies.

Common Sense Health: Diet, Detox and Physical Activities

Common Sense Health is a hype free, “back to basics” toolbox to give you ideas to help you improve your health. No big investment or complicated format, just start where you are with what you have.

You can view a full listing of Laurie Neverman's books at <http://commonsensehome.com/books/>